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Engaging Individuals to be Effective Collectives:
A Ganzian Analysis of Leader/Follower
Relationships in Times of Challenge.

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ACRONYMS

AD	Assistant Directors
CAA	Civil Aviation Authority
CAQDAS	Computer-assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
CMT	Corporate Management Team
CPA	Continuous Performance Assessment
CRM	Crew Resource Management
DETR	Department of the Environment, Transport and Regions
DL	Distributed Leadership
DTLR	Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions
EVL	Exit-Voice-Loyalty
EVLN	Exit-Voice-Loyalty-Neglect
FO	Field Organizer
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GTM	Grounded Theory Method
HPDS	High Potential Development Scheme
IDeA	Improvement and Development Agency
LBDQ	Leader Behaviour Description Questionnaire
LMX	Leader-Member Exchange Theory
MLQ	Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire
MP	Member of Parliament
MSP	Member of Scottish Parliament
NHS	National Health Service
NLGN	New Local Government Network

RAF	Royal Air Force
RLT	Relational Leadership Theory
SNP	Scottish National Party
SOLACE	Society of Local Authority Chief Executives
SRG	Safety Regulation Group
TLI	Transformational Leadership Inventory
USCM	United States Conference of Mayors
YCMAD	You Can Make A Difference

ABSTRACT

Engaging and formulating stronger working relationships within public, private and political organizations is a complex, fluid and challenging task for individuals in all positions, especially those in positions of authority and leadership. This research focuses on the engagement of people as a ‘wicked’ problem amongst middle to senior managers and some political figures. This problem is particularly apparent when individuals work across silos, in partnerships, within blame cultures, and through periods of challenge and change, especially in relation to budget cuts and constant restructuring.

Using Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2012; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1994), the empirical data collated for the Warwick Commission on Elected Mayors and City Leadership (2012)¹ was initially used. This initial data set provided insights and what Glaser and Strauss (1968) call ‘hunches’ into the issue of politically engaging with the citizen, producing several examples where city leaders had engaged innovatively with the citizen. To build on these ‘hunches’ further research was conducted during facilitated sessions in leadership development, identifying conversations with middle to senior managers around engaging teams, employees and partners.

Three specific cases were identified and researched to examine why some organizations are failing in engaging their employees, identifying and highlighting some of the barriers preventing learning, dissent and effective change. These three cases of *disorganization* were compared and contrasted against three further empirical cases of *organization* where engagement, relationships, learning and dissent are acceptable and encouraged.

Focusing on studying ‘the space between’ leaders and followers ‘to advance knowledge of relational leadership’ engaging ‘across disciplines and perspectives’ (Uhl-Bien, 2012: xiv - xv), the research question being addressed is ‘how can the complex, iterative processes of relationships help re-engage individual actors in a collective to tackle challenges?’

Upon analysis of the data and the literature from various disciplines (including Leadership Studies, Social Movements and Collective Identity, and Communication Studies), a heuristic framework ‘Beyond the Collective’ was constructed. Using the work of Ganz (2010) around ‘Public Narrative’ and his practical experiences working with social movements, the framework expands on his use of storytelling to understand how a collective of individuals can grapple with their problems by using New Beginnings, to Build Common Purpose for Action and Collectively Learn for the future.

¹ <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/research/warwickcommission/electedmayors/>

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Only 13 per cent of the global workforce is actively engaged (defined as ‘fully participating in their job roles’), costing organizations billions of pounds, dollars or euros (as researched and presented in the Gallup report *State of the Global Workplace Report* [2013]). Even the countries demonstrating the highest levels of active engagement – Australia and New Zealand – only engaged 24 per cent of the workforce. This lack of engagement was dramatically reproduced in November 2012, at the launch of a Government-backed movement Engage for Success². A powerful video was shown to the audience showing a young man ranting into the camera about how organizations in the United Kingdom are not ‘giving employees a voice,’ declaring, ‘I’m not a human resource; I’m a human being.’

The same levels of disengagement can also be seen in Politics with empty ballot boxes³; local election turnouts less than 20 per cent; general election turnouts at 60 per cent; political party membership in decline with ‘the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds now having more members than all the political parties put together’ (Wright, 2003: 77); youth membership of political parties on the brink of disappearing (Hooghe, 2004: 332); and political trust in decline, with a MORI poll in 2002 showing politicians ranked the lowest out of sixteen professions with only 19 per cent of respondents believing politicians to be truthful and honest (Rawnsley, 2005: 7).

² <http://www.hrmagazine.co.uk/article-details/engagement-special-david-macleod-and-nita-clarke-on-engage-for-success>

³ Police Crime Commissioner elections 15 November 2012

Why is it that people – in politics and across organizations – are so disengaged?

The first tranche of data collated was initially for the Warwick Commission on Directly Elected Mayors⁴, therefore considering local government and city leadership. The research design was specifically targeted to address questions that were proposed by the appointed commissioners for the report. Whilst interviewing the subjects for the report, there were issues arising around the subject of engaging citizens, and relationships between them and the local council, and it was these comments and stories emerging from the interviews that initiated the proposed research question for this project: How can the complex, iterative processes of relationships help re-engage individual actors in a collective to tackle challenges?

The initial focus, therefore, was around the issue of poor political engagement, realizing it is not just a problem in Britain. It appears that nowhere in the Western world is able to animate electorates to enthusiastically participate in the democratic process, with ‘politics’ almost becoming a dirty word (Hay, 2007). This problem largely exists when a collective’s interest is not best served by the self-interests of the individuals that represent the collective; in other words the population is disenchanted by their politicians and political leaders. Why is engagement of the citizen in politics important? Democratic politics is a collective decision, a way of influencing what happens within and beyond the shores of Britain, and it confronts the conflicts and different perspectives in society about what to do with resources and how to use these resources (Stoker, 2006).

⁴ <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/research/warwickcommission/electedmayors/>

Research has shown participation to be in steep decline, especially in the United States (Putnam, 2000) and in Britain (Stoker, 2006). When reading the literature on political engagement within the discipline of political science, ‘participation’ and ‘engagement’ are used as alternative expressions for one another, however they are different and each should be distinguished. Dahlgren (2009: 80) differentiates between the two as follows: Engagement refers to subjective states, a mobilized, focused attention on something; participation presumes some degree of engagement, therefore engagement is a prerequisite for participation. To be engaged, and therefore participate in something, there must be a connection to the practical for an individual to feel empowered about a do-able activity. It often involves acts of communication, with the engagement (and therefore participation) of a citizen being connected to others. Without engagement, people will not necessarily participate, especially not fully. From a political perspective, a lack of engagement could be interpreted as a political act to be actively disengaged and a conscious decision not to participate (Coleman, 2006).

The explanations in the political literature regarding the absence of engagement have often expressed the ‘resignation’ of those individuals who feel that the perceived ‘elitist’ political system does not include them or offer any incentive for political participation, and leaves many feeling overwhelmed by powerlessness (Dahlgren, 2009). Hirschman (1970) discusses this in his early work around the decline of organizational performance - Exit, Voice and Loyalty (EVL) – with Exit (literally or psychologically) being similar in definition to Dahlgren’s ‘resignation’ of citizens, because an individual’s Loyalty dissipates when having no Voice.

Other ways to understand this lack of political engagement include distrust, ambivalence and indifference. Bennulf and Hedberg (1999) discuss these three attitudes as follows: Distrust represents a clear adverse attitude, signaling a serious distancing from the political systems via active disengagement; ambivalence shows some involvement, however the effort that is required to be engaged is too great, with participation not being strong enough; and indifference is a complete disinterest in politics, an ‘alienation’ where politics is treated as irrelevant. Whilst researching the politically disengaged, Bennulf and Hedberg (1999) found that although distrust and ambivalence were present amongst the disengaged, the prominent sentiment was ‘indifference’. Dahlgren (2009) further proposes that ‘indifference’ is the consequence of a feeling of remoteness and not being able to make a difference, or a sense that politics is personally insignificant to oneself. These ways of considering disengagement are subjective states, complex and dependent on social situations and show an increasing distrust of hierarchical politics, but not necessarily of democracy (Inglehart, 1997). ‘Critical citizens’ (Norris, 1999) may be disillusioned with political leaders and conventional party politics, yet the basic premise of a democratic society is seen as an important part of society.

This issue of political disengagement was the starting point for this research: can we explain how some forms of leadership appear to better engage people, build relationships, and encourage individuals to be more involved in their local communities or places of work - to make a difference and be more than just a collective of individuals – while other forms of leadership do not?

The initial research around local government and city leadership being specifically undertaken for the University of Warwick required further research to be conducted to allow this project to move away from the Commission report, but still making use of the research data. The focus therefore changed from political leadership and disengagement, to leadership, engagement and relationships in more general terms across both the public and private sectors. This dissertation focuses on the latter, with the former being summarized in appendix 6, ensuring the work conducted for the commission is acknowledged, yet presented distinctly separately ensuring there is no confusion regarding my role within the commission report and my personal contribution to academia.

The first question or ‘hunch’ (Charmaz, 2000; Charmaz and Bryant, 2011; Glaser and Strauss, 1968) around this issue of engagement came when realizing that much of the literature focuses on *why* people are disengaged with (political) leaders (Dahlgren, 2009; Martin, 2012; Stoker, 2006; Whiteley, 2012), and not *how* leadership can re-engage and mobilize individuals to *want* to become part of something and make a difference. The ‘hunch’ continued during the interview process for the Warwick Commission (twelve mayors from England; six council leaders; thirty-two formal and informal interviews; seven mayors from across Canada, Australia and New Zealand; one short ethnography; and, numerous public meetings and debates), especially with regards to four particular cases – two in Canada, one in New Zealand and one in England – where three politically independent mayors and one political party mayor had been able to better engage with the citizens using various methods to give the citizens a voice.

Expanding on the initial coding and analysis, with the use of Grounded Theory as a methodology, the initial ‘hunch’ was further investigated across public and private organizations, especially after reading the recent Gallup report *State of the Global Workplace Report* (2013). The report highlighted the costs of active disengagement (similar to ‘indifference’ and ‘distrust’ in the politics literature) in organizations to be in the region of £52 billion and £70 billion per year in the United Kingdom, \$450 billion to \$550 billion per year in the United States, and €112 billion to €138 billion per year in Germany. This report demonstrates that disengagement is not just an issue within politics, but across most organizations and at a huge cost. If most political leaders seem to have generally failed to engage their electorates – but some were clearly more successful – was the same pattern visible in organizational leadership? To answer this question, and to build on the political cases identified during the initial research for the commission, it was necessary to conduct further organizational research.

This further research commenced by considering six different case studies: a top ten global corporation, a medium sized local authority, the opinion of a single executive from a small blue-chip engineering company, a Canadian Mayor, an English City Mayor and the Royal Air Force Aerobatic Team, the Red Arrows. Alongside these cases, observations and comments were made across thirty-three leadership development workshops involving middle to senior managers across the public sector (NHS England, NHS Scotland, Police, Social Services, Civil Service, local authorities) and a few private sector organizations (KLM, Emirates, Birmingham Airport Authority), supported by fourteen one-on-one interviews. This further research was necessary to answer the research question: How can the

complex, iterative processes of relationships help re-engage individual actors in a collective to tackle challenges?

The journey of the research conducted can be seen in figure 3.1, in chapter 3 - Methodology. This figure diagrammatically displays a timeline showing how and when various interviews, case studies and ethnographies were conducted, coded, categorized and analyzed. The various horizontal dotted-line arrows represent the back and forth nature of the research and analysis, and the heavier dotted-line demonstrates how memos and notes were made throughout the whole project.

Before I introduce the various chapters further, I would like to return to the issue of political engagement and briefly discuss a very recent demonstration of how the citizens of Scotland have bucked the trend by being mobilized and demonstrating high levels of engagement.

SCOTLAND BUCKS THE TREND

The recent dramatic U-turn in political disengagement - ‘a campaign that energized voters across the country’⁵ - culminated on the 18 September 2014 with the citizens of Scotland going to the polls to answer the simple question – Should Scotland be an independent country? The Scottish Independence Referendum Act 2013 was passed on the 15 November 2013 following the 2007 Scottish National Party (SNP) manifesto policy to hold a referendum in 2010. In the 2007 election, the SNP became the largest party in the Scottish Parliament and formed a minority government. Alex Salmond became the Scottish First Minister, and he launched the SNP ‘National Conversation’ in August 2007.

This was the start of various white papers, draft referendum bills and reviews to hold a referendum in 2010. However, only 38 per cent of MSPs voted in favour, resulting in the Scottish Government withdrawing the bill⁶. Despite this defeat, Salmond did not give up, ensuring it was published in the 2011 Scottish Parliamentary manifesto. The SNP won a majority in this election and ensured that they had the mandate to hold an independence referendum, with Westminster legislating in January 2012 to provide the Scottish Government with the relevant powers to hold this promised referendum. In October 2012 the Edinburgh Agreement was reached, and the following autumn a white paper outlining *Scotland's Future* was published.

⁵ News.sky.com, 19 September 2014, accessed 22 October 2014.

⁶ MacLeod, Angus (3 September 2009). "Salmond to push ahead with referendum Bill". London: *The Times*. 10 September 2009. Accessed 23 October 2014.

Despite his apparent charisma, determination and popularity with the citizens of Scotland, Alex Salmond's dream of an independent Scotland was not to be (44.7 per cent voting 'Yes' and the majority - 55.3 per cent - voting 'No'). However, what did happen had not been witnessed at polling stations in a British general election since 1950 when there were queues at polling stations with a turnout of 83.9 per cent⁷. With turnouts in more recent elections only reaching 50.4 per cent for the Scottish Parliament and 60 per cent for the most recent general election in 2010⁸, the turnout on the 18 September 2014 was 84.59 per cent⁹. What was so different about this electoral campaign for it to achieve such high levels of engagement and participation?

The polls on the lead up to the referendum were very close, with the days before indicating a lead against independence of only 4 per cent¹⁰, and final polls showing a 6 per cent lead for 'No'¹¹. With public opinion being so close, it has been suggested there were three main reasons (Sargeson, 2014)¹² why the engagement was so high. First, it was about Scottish citizens influencing their own futures with the fate of Scotland in their hands – they had a direct choice about Nationhood. Second, there was risk involved with high political and

⁷ www.telegraph.co.uk 'Voter turnout for Scottish Referendum could be highest of any British election' by Simon Johnson – 18 September 2014, accessed 22 October 2014.

⁸ www.telegraph.co.uk 'Voter turnout for Scottish Referendum could be highest of any British election' by Simon Johnson – 18 September 2014, accessed 22 October 2014.

⁹ BBC News – 'Scottish Independence Referendum – Results' – 18 September 2014, accessed 22 October 2014.

¹⁰ BBC News 'Scottish Independence: vote will go to the wire', 7 September 2014, accessed 22 October 2014.

¹¹ *The Guardian*, Patrick Wintour – 'Scottish Final Poll of referendum shows 6 point lead for No', 18 September 2014, accessed 22 October 2014.

¹² Alex Sargeson, www.bbench.co.uk, 'Unlike the Scottish Referendum, the 2015 UK General Election will fall victim to voter apathy', 22 September 2014, accessed 23 October 2014.

national consequences; therefore votes could make a difference. Thirdly, there was a rational decision to be made with the cost of not being part of the vote being too great to ignore. Linked in to this was the considerable number of younger first-time voters, with the voting age lowered from eighteen to sixteen engaging a new audience in a once in a generation opportunity to play a part in shaping *their* future (71 per cent of sixteen to seventeen year olds voted in favour of an independent Scotland, compared to 73 per cent of over sixty-fives voting against). Overall, what these differences demonstrate is a nation feeling empowered and part of a movement to deliver a potential massive change to *their* futures.

INDIFFERENCE – THE DIRECTLY ELECTED MAYORS REFERENDA 2002 AND 2012

The complete opposite of these high levels of engagement recently witnessed in Scotland was observed during the referenda held across England in 2002 and 2012 regarding the option of directly elected mayors in local government.

The first, initiated by the New Labour Government under Prime Minister Tony Blair and part of the Local Government Act 2000, was a referendum held in October 2002. The intention of the Act, including the proposed introduction of a directly elected mayor, was to increase community leadership, provide more visible accountability at a local level, and better engage with the citizen. With little support from councillors, which in turn affected the opinions of the engaged citizens (John, 2010), only thirty out of four hundred councils went to the polls, with turnouts as low as 10 per cent (Whiteley, 2012). Only eleven places opted to change to the mayoral model (twelve including London), with eleven mayors eventually elected by their respective local areas. These eleven were only 3 per cent of those holding a referendum opting for the mayoral model, and the whole exercise was viewed as a huge disappointment by politicians and commentators who supported the concept, especially because of the lack of take up by cities or larger county councils.

On 3rd May 2012, another referendum was held around the introduction of directly elected mayors in twelve of England's largest and most influential cities¹³. This

¹³ Birmingham, Bradford, Bristol, Coventry, Leeds, Leicester, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham, Sheffield and Wakefield.

was part of the Localism Bill introduced by the Coalition Government led by Prime Minister David Cameron.

To consider why the coalition government decided to revisit directly elected local leaders and what the impact might be, the University of Warwick set up a commission to independently investigate and report what existing mayors, officers, opponents and politicians, thought were the advantages or disadvantages of directly elected mayors. The commission set an overarching research question: ‘What is the Role of Elected Mayors in Providing Strategic Leadership to cities?’ Alongside this question there were many subsidiary research questions to consider why and how elected mayors were (or were not) making a difference? However, despite this, and other reports (for example Randle, 2004; Gash and Sims, 2012; Centre for Cities, 2011) contributing to the debates that were being held in the lead up to the referendum, turnouts were extremely low.

With a poor average turnout of 32 per cent across the ten cities (lowest in Newcastle at 22 per cent and the highest in Bradford at 35 per cent)¹⁴, the citizens of the cities were not engaged or interested in the potential changes for their cities, except Bristol (with a turnout of only 24 percent)¹⁵. Other exceptions were Leicester, where the mayoral model was supported by the Labour group in early 2011 (with their first City Mayor, Sir Peter Soulsby voted in in May 2011), and Liverpool who decided to bypass a referendum in February 2012 with the electorate voting for a new directly elected mayor on 3rd May 2012 – some

¹⁴ Sourced from *The Times*, Saturday 5 May 2012.

¹⁵ *The Times*, 5 May 2012, accessed 5 May 2012.

believed this was encouraged by the prospect of £130m through a proposed ‘city deal’.

HOW DO LEADERS ENGAGE AND IMPROVE RELATIONS?

Unlike the citizens in Scotland, for the elected mayor referenda there was little mobilization, little direct risk to arouse emotion, little feeling that it concerned the collective identity of the citizens, and a lot of cynicism that it was just another party political attempt at unnecessary change. Many of the reasons for citizen disengagement in the political science literature are obviously the opposite of the reasons *why* individuals become engaged. As Dahlgren (2009) suggested, to be engaged there must be a connection to the practical for an individual to feel empowered about a do-able activity. This became evident when analyzing the four identified cases of the two mayors in Canada, one mayor in New Zealand and one mayor in England. Reviewing how they had mobilized and engaged their citizens, achieved more reasonable turnouts and made creative efforts to listen to and empower the citizens, I turned to social movement theory as a way to further understand *how* individuals could be engaged and relations improved.

The recent high turnout in Scotland is an ideal counter to the assumption that voters are – and always will be – disengaged, and a clear example of the power of mobilization through emotion, collective identity and shared purpose that replicates the requirements for mobilization that are discussed in the social movement literature (for example, Ganz, 2009, 2010; Gould, D. 2004; Gould, R. 1995; Melucci, 1988; Opp, 2009).

The following outlines the structure of the sections and chapters, to provide a review of the content of the research and how it develops to contribute to the area of leadership, especially with regards to engagement and relationships.

THE CHAPTERS AHEAD

After this introduction, the overall focus of chapter 2 is a detailed literature review contemplating and reflecting on the literature around leadership and followership, exploring some of the theories depicting leadership as being embodied by a successful individual, and critiquing them against leadership theories that consider it as a process. The chapter then progresses to explore Relational Leadership Theory (RLT) (Uhl-Bien, 2006) and expands on why relationships are important in organizations. This builds into a discussion about how social movements mobilize and engage their members around a collective identity, examining the work by Melucci (1988).

Expanding on the social movements literature, the chapter then concludes by exploring, analyzing and critiquing the importance of the practical and academic work of Marshall Ganz (2004, 2009a, 2009b and 2011) whose theory and ideas form the foundations of the framework for the analysis of engagement. It looks into his twenty-eight years practically working with social movements, and his theory of public narrative in leadership: *The Story of Self, Us and Now*.

The next chapter - chapter 3 - covers the research strategy, research design and methodological approach used for collating and analyzing the empirical data accumulated. Due to the subjective, complex and ever-changing nature of leadership (Bryman, 2011; Conger, 1989, 1998; Hunt, 1991), a qualitative approach was taken for the research to take a theoretically inductive and epistemologically interpretive stance. With the area of leadership being investigated covering engagement and the relationships between individuals, this

strategy would help me to understand the deliberation of the leaders' and followers' social constructions of their social worlds, and to examine how they constructed meanings through personal interactions.

The iterative-inductive strategy, building on 'hunches' identified in the data, took the format of a Grounded Theory method (Bryant, 2002; Bryant and Charmaz, 2007; Charmaz, 2006, 2012; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Remenyi, 2013; Strauss and Corbin, 1990, 1997) and the data was used to build on the initial coding conducted for the commission report. The use of Grounded Theory allowed an iterative journey to be undertaken, allowing a story to build between the data and observations being noted, and the theories of leadership being applied. The journey allowed data and 'hunches' to be re-investigated and re-visited, moving back and forth over the empirical data initially collated for the commission report, to be compared and analyzed against further collated data.

The second part of chapter 3 focuses on the background to the Grounded Theory Method (GTM) in qualitative research, and provides a critique of the various approaches written about, adapted and used over the years. Despite Grounded Theory being 'vulnerable to uncritical acceptance and imprecise application' (Annells, 1996: 391), its use, in the experiences of Thomas and James (2006), is that overall social scientists use Grounded Theory because of its accessibility in offering a set of procedures to help generate theory. This part of chapter 3 demonstrates why the adapted version used was appropriate for this research and why the iterative nature of Grounded Theory required a second literature review to focus on the new areas of interest.

Chapter 4 is the empirical analysis of *disengagement* in *disorganizations* in practice. It outlines three cases, two drawn from direct observations and interviews, all documented in a series of research notebooks ('memos' Bryant and Charmaz, 2012), and one from secondary data. The three cases demonstrate examples of poor engagement and damaged relationships: a top 10 multinational organization, a middle-sized county council, and the thoughts and experiences of the executive from the small private blue-chip engineering company. Consideration is given to the organizational tensions between the leader/follower relationships, especially when things are going wrong and individuals are at risk of being blamed, with relationships being potentially weak, and why these organizations may be at risk of a 'Drift into Failure' Dekker (2011b).

Chapter 5 focuses on *how* some leaders in three specific empirical cases, also documented from direct observations and interviews, with 'memos' made research notebooks, have improved engagement with their followers and therefore established more effective organizational relationships. The first of the three cases is the story of the Mayor of Calgary in Canada, focusing on how he realized the importance of re-engaging the citizens of Calgary by doing 'politics differently'. The second case study demonstrates the importance of relationships for the Red Arrows – the Royal Air Force Aerobatic Display Team - demonstrating how the team worked effectively together to ensure they remain amongst the best aerobatic display team in the world. The final case showing better engagement of individuals is based around a mini ethnography and a series of interviews at Leicester City Council, around the end of the first elected mayor's first one hundred days. It is the story of the City Mayor and his team of senior

officers and Assistant Mayors (members of his cabinet) working differently and more efficiently, through stronger working relationships since the Mayor imposed rapid changes over the weekend after his election.

These three cases empirically demonstrate how the importance of leaders in formal positions can encourage individuals to develop better relationships by engaging and including individuals to work more effectively as a collective, especially through more constructive dissent. Dissent is therefore discussed, drawing on research from the Communication Studies discipline and summarized graphically in the ‘Hill of Upward Dissent.’

Chapter 6 takes all of this analysis alongside other numerous interviews, leadership development workshops, observations and secondary literature examples, to construct a three-stage framework – Beyond the Collective - to explore and explain how some leaders, practicing some forms of leadership, are able to engage people where others fail: New Beginnings, Building Common Purpose for Action and Collective Learning. The majority of the chapter then details the three stages of the framework outlining how some organizations during times of challenge – public or private – appear to engage individuals more successfully, build an engaged collective to eventually be more than just a group of entities, and move Beyond the Collective.

The final chapter – chapter 7 - concludes the work undertaken and the framework discussed as a theoretical analysis of the practical work necessary to engage individuals to improve their relationships and move Beyond the Collective. By

applying the work of Ganz to the data collated, adapting and building on his work to develop this heuristic, my hope is that it will help explain how improved working relationships were used to focus on the bigger challenges and ‘wicked’ problems that were being encountered day to day in the public and private organizations studied. The final part of the chapter will consider the limitations of the research and the framework, as well as further potential research.

CONTRIBUTION TO ACADEMIA

This introduction outlines the unusual origins of the initial research data collection for the University of Warwick report, under the direction of the Board of Commissioners, and how it then begun to take shape into focusing on engagement and improving relationships.

Building on this initial data and conducting further research from a variety of backgrounds and cases, the contribution to academia is three-fold: First it is a piece of research that considers a mix of disciplines and subjects to grasp a better understanding of the *why* of disengagement - beyond the political boundary into the general organizational environment; secondly, it attempts to consider *how* some audiences were engaged rather than just the *why* most audiences were disengaged; and finally, it highlights the role of leadership in building relationships to engage a group of individuals to realize that their individual identities are a necessary prerequisite to a collective identity. In effect, I suggest that leadership cannot be adequately understood by taking either a leader or a follower perspective, as Alvesson and Sveningsson (2012: 207), Collinson (2005: 1423) and Uhl-Bien (2012: xiv) have already suggested, but to understand the importance of focusing on Uhl-Bien's 'space between leader and followers' we need to go further and consider how the individuals either make – or fail to make – the 'space' work in practice.

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

The cause of social or individual phenomenon is never another social or individual phenomenon alone, but always a combination of a social and an individual phenomenon (Blumer, 1979, 1939: 9).

THEORY OF LEADERSHIP: AN INDIVIDUAL HERO OR A RELATIONAL PROCESS?

‘There are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept’, according to Bass (1990: 11), with many believing it is a ‘Street-wise Hercules’ or a ‘White Knight on a fiery steed’ to use the words of Bonnie Tyler¹⁶ from her 1986 hit song *Holding Out For a Hero*. Others view it as a social relationship, with the leaders helping a group of followers create and achieve shared goals, therefore mobilizing them to reach a set of objectives; as Nye (2008: 3) suggests ‘Leadership is ubiquitous, and leaders are all around us’.

When considering leadership as a process of social interactions, leadership is less about getting people to do things, ensuring they should always comply, and more about getting people to *want* to do things through influence. However, in the past, leadership has often been written about focusing on the psychology of the individual who appears to make the difference and achieve the results – an understanding of leadership grounded in the nature of the individual (Haslam, Reicher and Platow, 2011). This individual entity perspective, within the more

¹⁶ <http://www.songlyrics.com/bonnie-tyler/i-need-a-hero-lyrics/>

written by Jim Steinman and Dean Pitchford, performed by Bonnie Tyler.

psychological arenas of the leadership development field, focuses on the individual as a leader (or follower), particularly their cognition, attributes and personality (Kennedy et al., 2012). It is a personal construct theoretical approach specifically concerned with how an individual understands a unique world experience (Kelley, 1992).

‘Heroic leadership’ is how most of us were introduced to leadership either through myths and legends of saints slaying dragons, historical stories about Julius Caesar, great kings interpreted by Shakespeare, US presidents or British prime ministers making history, like Abraham Lincoln or Winston Churchill, but three writers are usually taken as the progenitors of this approach: Plato, Machiavelli and Carlyle. Since the teachings of Plato and *The Republic* (380 BC/ 1993) set the scene to focus on the individual who has exceptional qualities, as a rare type of philosopher-ruler, qualified to lead, be respected and admired, the debate as to whether a leader is born or made has continued. Niccolo Machiavelli’s *Il Principe* - The Prince - written in 1513 (published in 1532 five years after his death) provided prescriptive advice for a new prince and explored how a ruler should be concerned about their reputation, but that at the appropriate times – and in an immoral society - they must be willing to act immorally for the sake of the collective. Being a leader, therefore, was not about popularity and that ‘it is much safer to be feared than loved when one of the two must be lacking’ (cited in Grint, 1997: 60). By the nineteenth century a series of lectures given by Thomas Carlyle (1840) continued to propound the view of a god-like hero as a leader who is ‘the Hero as Divinity’ and ‘he is the living light-fountain, which it is good and pleasant to be near’ (Carlyle, 1840: 3). These historical writings have come to

define the exceptional qualities (Plato) and prescriptive advice (Machiavelli) that conceptualized and helped the heroic individual be more adept at providing the inspiration, direction and answers the followers required.

Over the centuries that have followed since these high level historical depictions of leadership, there have been developments in contemporary theories with leadership being down to the individual, or a social process, or a relationship between the leader and their followers. Being an essentially contested concept (Grint, 2005a), I am going to summarize and review some of these approaches to leadership before finally focusing on the area I am concerned with – building on relational leadership to improve engagement. Despite many individualist and trait-based theories previously undergoing heavy critique, they still influence leadership thinking and are continually being developed (Bolden et al., 2011). Due to the subject of leadership being heavily contested and limited space, this is not a comprehensive review but an overview to set the scene for my contribution to the subjective arena of leadership and relational studies within collectives, especially during times of change or challenge.

Developing Carlyle's (1840) work of the 'Great Man' view of leadership, initial research in the west during the time of the world wars often focused on distinguishing the core traits of recognized effective leaders in helping to identify potential leaders for more accurate recruitment and specific development of military officers. Many of the characteristics allegedly associated with leaders, including personality (extroversion, stability, assertiveness, courageousness, etc.), physique (tall, strong, etc.) and intelligence (good qualifications, long experience,

good memory, etc.) were soon considered to be insufficient predictors of future performance (Harris 1949). Shaw (1976) and Fraser (1978) supported this in their work, finding the presence of any or all of a particular list of traits did not make someone a 'leader', nor their absence exclude a person from being a 'leader'. The advantage of this testing of personality and using other psychometric measurements was the large numbers of people that could be tested, therefore providing numbers for reliability and validity, not just focusing on the select few (Haslam, et al, 2011). Work by Mann (1959), Stogdill (1948) and Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991), focusing on identifying a vast array of traits, concluded that it was verging on impossible to find them all in any one single person. These authors soon also realized that the meanings of these traits were dependent on the context in which they were required. For example, a soldier requires very different leadership traits, than say a chief executive of a bank, or a politician. Stogdill (1948) identified in his work that the personality factors he had considered were of little use without knowledge of the 'social situation' the leader was in.

Moving on from considering the traits of a leader, research into the psychology of leadership also focused on behavior – questioning what leaders do. One of the more recognized behavioral models was McGregor's (1960) 'Theory X' and 'Theory Y'. He proposed that an individual's leadership style is influenced by a person's assumptions about human nature. Individual leaders who are behaviorally 'Theory X' are more negative about human nature and performance, assuming the average worker dislikes work and will avoid it and personal responsibility if at all possible. Their leadership behaviour therefore demonstrates coercion, command and control. 'Theory Y' leaders demonstrate the opposite,

assuming human beings view work as normal as rest and play, seeking out responsibility as well as accepting it. 'Theory Y' leaders enhance their workers' imaginations, creativity and individual contributions to organizational projects, problems and challenges. In summary, McGregor suggests that a leader's individual assumptions affects, indeed conditions, their approach to leadership: 'Theory X' being more autocratic, and 'Theory Y' being more participative.

McGregor's theory, and many of the other behavioral theories (for example, Blake and Mouton, 1964; Fleishman, 1953; Halpin and Winer, 1957; Lewin et al., 1939) only tend to focus on two dimensions of behavior - task and people – producing leadership styles that are either highly directive or highly participative. As individuals, regardless of context or relationships with the workforce, according to trait and behavior theories, leaders in positions of authority are expected to display these characteristics and make a difference towards positive outcomes and change.

These individualist theories are still deemed effective by many organizations that apply psychometric tests to potential leaders as a benchmark for assessors to predict future success, and styles of behavior. Ladkin (2005) highlights assumptions with regards to these tests and their use to predict the potential of an individual as a leader and suggests that an individual's personality traits do not remain stable or distinct and are situational and therefore cannot be 'boxed' into categories. Work by Haslam (2004) provides further support for this in his 'social identity approach', in which individual identities are actually in part construct dependent on the social group and are therefore not stable and static, but are in constant flux.

It is for these reasons that a purely individualist theoretical view of leadership is seen by some leadership scholars - especially within sociology - as, 'A narrow, leader-centric view on leadership' (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2012: 204). The individualist approach also parallels the popular concept of transformational leadership when an individual initiates and communicates transformation in a convincing manner, with charisma and vision (Conger and Kanungo, 1998; Kennedy, et al, 2012; Rost, 1992; Shamir, House and Arthur, 1993). Leadership here is viewed as an ideal (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2012), often surrounding a leader with a heroic veil who is able to achieve success through mergers, acquisitions and turnarounds, meeting targets and achieving outcomes, all because they are visionary and charismatic, a heroic model that leads followers into 'romanticizing leaders' (Meindl, et al, 1985).

Max Weber (1978) is usually cited as the founder of one strand of this heroic frame that he called 'charismatic' leadership, an ideal type for facilitating comparative analysis, and part of his original work on power and authority. Within this work he suggested that people comply because of one of the following three forms of legitimate authority: Traditional authority, relating to the nature of the position held in office, typically monarchs; Rational-legal authority, with compliance being derived from the rationality of the authority, typically bureaucrats; and Charismatic authority, when individuals comply due to the extraordinary powers of a charismatic individual, and followers' personal belief in the charismatic. Despite the ambiguities about charisma being located in the person or embedded in the relationship, Weber believed the concept was binary: leaders were not 'quite charismatic', they either were charismatics or they were

not. Charismatics held the only ‘pure’ source of ‘soft’ power (Nye, 2008) and did not need to resort to coercion (hard power [Nye, 2008]) to persuade others – unlike traditional or rational-legal authority. Weber viewed charismatics as set apart from the rest, holding exceptional powers, and leading their followers through consent. By considering the Greek word *khárisma* (χάρισμα) meaning ‘divine gift’ or ‘gift of grace’, it can be understood why charismatics are viewed in Weber’s understanding as superhuman and considered only one of the few who can make a radical difference in times of social crisis.

Throughout Weber’s work, he also argued there were five related elements that involve charisma in leadership: an individual of exceptional qualities, a social crisis, a radical solution to the crisis offered by the charismatic, devoted followers, and repeated successes (Trice and Beyer, 1986). Social crisis did not mean imminent distress, but a form of social distress that required a ‘heroic’ miracle. Weber was aware of the need for the charismatic to demonstrate continuous success, to show their domination and powers time and again and this could be the reason why many charismatics eventually fall after only a short time in position, especially if the social distress diminishes. There are leaders throughout history who are the contrary of this temporal limit and House (1999) cites Nelson Mandela, and Mahatma Gandhi to name a few, and these types of individuals are remembered for having a ‘personal magnetism, spellbinding powers... passionate, driven individuals who are able to paint a compelling vision of the future’ (Hughes, Ginnett and Curphy, 1999: 286).

The association of charisma with supernatural powers clearly limits its operational utility in conventional organization theory and led leadership scholars to reconstruct the concept as ‘organizational’ charisma (House, 1999) (what Bratton et al [2005] call ‘weak charisma’) to provide the beginnings of a neo-charismatic leadership paradigm to cover the operational gaps in Weber’s initial interpretations of charisma. House (1999) suggests charismatic leadership involved an individual possessing a relationship with others based on shared morals and values; or they have achieved something extraordinary that has involved others who are extraordinarily loyal and trusting, who are willing to make sacrifices for the leader; or, they hold a complex set of behaviors and characteristics that enable them to achieve the previous two statements. To summarize this approach to charisma and put it more commonly, ‘it is the power of a person to inspire fascination and loyalty’, someone who is self-confident, with high-energy, enthusiasm, able to communicate all of this into an ability to create an emotional attraction to followers (Nye, 2008: 55).

So if it is suggested that a charismatic leader holds these qualities, is charisma just about them, or is it about the followers, or the context they are in? Conger and Kanungo (1998) suggest it could be related to all three. Willner (1985: 15) supports this with her study of seven political leaders of the twentieth century, concluding that in most cases ‘charisma is found not so much in the personality of the leader as in the perceptions of the people he leads’, usually in the context of social crises. Continuing from this, charismatics have been labeled differently depending on how they are viewed and what they have achieved. These include ‘negative’ charismatics, who are unwilling to delegate, fail to empower followers,

lack planning and fail to pay attention to detail (De Vries, 2004); ‘close’ charismatics who work well in smaller inner circles where the effects of their personal charm are felt more intimately; ‘distant’ charismatics who are more theatrical in their performance to move and touch a broader audience with their projected charm (Yagil, 1998); and, ‘socialized’ charismatics who use their power to benefit others, with narcissistic ‘personalized’ charismatics who use their power to be self-serving (O’Connor, et al., 1995).

This labeling of charismatic leaders is evidence of how subjective and problematic the term ‘charisma’ actually is. Do followers see the individual as the charismatic or is it the situation requiring a strong need for change? Nye (2008: 60) quotes the commonly used example of Churchill during the Second World War when in 1939 he was not viewed by the British public as a charismatic, and yet a year later he demonstrated vision, confidence and strong communication skills and was viewed by the British public as the charismatic leader who did most to achieve success in the war. However, in 1945 he was voted out of office due to the focus changing from winning the war to constructing the welfare state. Nye suggests that it was not the loss of his charisma that caused him to lose the election, but the change of context and the needs of the followers. This example is a strong indicator of how imprecise charisma is as a term to define leadership. Because of this, leadership theorists began to incorporate the trait into the broader definition of transformational leadership.

Before considering transformational leadership (MacGregor Burns, 1978), the more conventional relationship between a leader as an individual and their

followers is based around reward for effort and punishment for lack of effort – otherwise referred to as transactional leadership. Transactional leadership is about ‘transactions’ between leader and follower, such as reward (wages), promotion or punishment. The transactions are agreed rules that work to meet expected outcomes (Bass, 1985). This style of leadership may be seen as common and necessarily based around the hard power of threat and reward (Nye, 2008). In complete contrast, transformational leadership is based around soft powers of inspiration (Nye, 2008) and is about a leader’s ability to motivate, engage and empower followers, appealing to their visions, moral and values, then persuading them to realign these with those of the leader and/or the organization. That persuasion is not necessarily ethical nor in the interests of followers, as Tourish points out (2013). MacGregor Burns’ intentions were that transformational leaders applied this approach across a variety of situations, taking into consideration different styles. Over time, it has taken a more specific stance in terms of enabling leadership in times of change and uncertainty, conflict and crises (Bass and Avolio, 1994).

Charisma, however, is just a small part of transformational leadership, with the latter being more about empowering followers to make a difference for the higher purpose of the group, all based around the overall context of the relationship – similar to what Heifetz (1994) refers to as ‘adaptive work’. For MacGregor Burns (1978), all transformational leaders are charismatic, but he does not view all charismatics as transformational leaders. He refers to these charismatic but non-transformational leaders, as ‘power wielders’ because they ensure followers are dependent, rather than empowered. Others have followed MacGregor Burns and

his work – labeling them ‘healthy’ and ‘unhealthy’ leaders (Zaleznik, 1974), or ‘authentic’ and ‘pseudo-transformational’ leaders (Bass, 1985). As Grint (2010: 97) observes, and as I have already alluded to in this section, these interpretations of charismatic and transformational leaders are all rooted in the subjective views and ethics of the observer or follower.

A potential solution to enable and empower followers to take on leadership is Distributed Leadership (DL). It is an ambiguous concept, with it not being entirely evident what is actually being distributed or by whom (Currie and Lockett, 2011). However its desirability lies in its efforts to be more inclusive and flatten a hierarchy, encouraging skills across an organization and enhance resourcefulness (Gronn, 2002; Hodgkinson, 1991). Despite the writing around DL growing, the concept’s boundaries have become ‘blurred’ (Currie and Lockett, 2011: 288) due to the conflicting definitions of leadership being about an individual or about a collective. Some writers consider DL to be a bottom-up concept characterizing it as ‘no one in charge’ (Buchanan et al, 2007), or best described as ‘collaborative leadership’ (Huxham and Vangen, 2000). Gronn (2002) discusses DL as being conjoint agency – a top-down model of DL ensuring direction – and concertive action – encouraging greater synergy and reciprocal influence. Spillane (2006) describes shared leadership as being in line with DL, due to the focus being on the interaction between leader and follower, with shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003) also encompassing ‘Super Leadership’ (Sims and Lorenzi, 1992), ‘Team Leadership’ (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993) and ‘Collective Leadership’ (Denis et al, 2001). All these concepts’ definitions are only separated by subjective interpretation, and all reflect the importance of

leadership being enacted by actors at all levels, and not necessarily an identified senior individual with authority (Currie and Lockett, 2011): the role of followers is as important within a collective with regards to influencing, supporting and contributing to leadership.

Followers play the key role in what goes right or wrong in an organization, despite the leaders being the ones often getting blamed by shareholders or the media when things go wrong. It is the followers who can easily affect leader-follower relationships; whether or not things happen, if action takes place, as individuals or as collectives, affecting the outcome either positively or negatively. Followers can comply or rebel, speak out or remain silent, engage and feel empowered, or disengage and become a negative fatalist – fatalistic with the intentions of being damaging to a situation or organization. A leader cannot be a leader without followers, and vice versa, therefore it cannot be realistic to ignore the distinctions and connections between leaders and followers (Chaleff, 2003). Leaders in most situations are the individuals in authority with ultimate accountability, however there are times that leaders are followers. The two are impossible to separate: ‘Two sides of one process, two parts of a whole’ (Chaleff, 2003: 2). For leaders and followers to be powerful together, both need to accept their own roles and the roles of each other, by taking personal responsibility seriously.

Kelley (2008) considers the followers themselves as having two sides, or two dimensions: independent thinking and activity. Independent thinking as a dimension is when followers think for themselves, or they turn to their leader to

think for them. Activity is dependent on the first dimension and refers to a style of followership being actively engaging, or passive and negative in participation. By considering an individual's dependency or independency, being active or passive, Kelley (2008) identified five basic styles of followership: alienated, exemplary, conformist, passive and pragmatist. Alienated followers have high levels of independent thinking, they are prone to displaying a passive nature, they do not participate therefore tending to be critical, skeptical and cynical, blocking a leader's desire to change. Kelley's take on exemplary followers is that they are also independent thinkers who are actively positive, although separate from the group and/or leader. If they agree with the action, they are supportive. However, if they disagree they can be challenging, albeit constructively. Conformist followers are highly active and engaged, but not very independent in their thinking and therefore comply and constantly ask for guidance from their leaders. As conformists, they are extremely supportive of their leaders and are thorough in their job, always looking to please their leader. Passive followers are just that – passive. They are not active or independent in thought, therefore requiring constant supervision and motivation (Kellerman, 2008). Finally, pragmatist followers are the middle men/women who show some independence in their thinking and demonstrate moderate active energy. Kelley (2008: 7) describes them 'as sitting on the fence and see which way the wind blows' because they will question the leader, but not critically.

Considering a follower's style, according to Kelley, could be useful for leaders in better understanding their employees and how to lead them more effectively, especially due to the obvious fact that followers make up the predominant element

of any workforce. Followers are an integral part of any organization and are responsible for actions being completed. Both Kelley and Kellerman consider the styles of followers, predominantly considering traits that are demonstrated. Is it these traits of a follower that affects their followership style? Or is it the context they find themselves working in? Could it be the influences of a leader affecting them to react and behave in a specific style? These questions all point to the style and behavior of a follower being as subjective and variable as that of a leader, and potentially as toxic (Lipman-Bluman, 2005) and dysfunctional (Hirschhorn, 1997).

Chaleff (2003) considers how followers should be more courageous in their followership, and not be passive or conformist, alienated or purely exemplary. He first looks at how historically followership was more about the dominance of leaders, with the followers being totally compliant. He considers the building of the pyramids or the laying of a railroad, with followers being coerced and following instruction. In more modern times, the information age requires a different leader-follower relationship, which he suggests is because of decentralized departments with complex structures and varying purposes all within one organization. Chaleff discusses how a central problem of the relationship between leader and follower is the tendency to be parent and child-like, with followers becoming too dependent on their leaders – conformist or passive in style – resulting in them becoming almost unable to relate with one another as followers, only relating to the leader. Because of this, Chaleff suggests followers need to be more courageous to re-orientate and balance the relationship. He uses the term ‘courageous’ to imply followers need courage to demonstrate when they

are right and when they are wrong, to be different and creative, and to have a voice and not be silent. His argument is that courageous followers are required to be the agents of change for the leaders who might not; the leaders who are not able to share power, invite feedback or encourage empowerment. Chaleff (2003: 6-8) explores five dimensions of courageous followership: the courage to assume responsibility; the courage to serve, work hard, take on additional responsibilities and stand up for their leader; the courage to challenge; the courage to participate in transformation; and, the courage to realize moral action is necessary against the leader. Throughout his work, Chaleff (2003) uses courage because he views affective followership as not being comfortable or a risk-free behavior. He believes courage develops through taking small risks to develop determination and practice, to prepare for larger risks where failure may require self-forgiveness and learning.

Combining Kelley's (2008) five styles of followership with Chaleff's (2003) five dimensions of courageous leadership, suggests that a follower should have the skills and aptitude to fit a dimension to the style of leaders and the context they are facing. However, being a leader, or a follower, is far more complex than being reduced to an individual entity, a person acting independently while influencing another person, which seems to be the premise of both these approaches. What about the processes involved to weave and work with the individual entities involved? Without followers, leaders would not exist (Kelley, 2004), and leadership is an interaction between leaders and followers (Grint, 2000). Despite writers considering the position of the follower (for example, Chaleff, 2003; Kelley, 2008; Meindl, 1995; Uhl-Bien and Pillai, 2007), these still

tend to be follower-centric, one-sided entity perspectives. It is an approach that neglects the actors involved being relational beings, interacting, integrating and involving themselves with the complex ambiguities of politics and cultures in organizations (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2012: 206). Followers, as well as leaders, are knowledgeable actors who are proactive, self-aware (Collinson, 2005) and hold a degree of 'soft powers' (Nye, 2008) that enable them to influence and negotiate. These factors all need to be appreciated in leadership, followership and relationship studies, to understand how the individuals involved, learn about and tackle challenges and issues beyond the tame routine of day-to-day activities: 'Studying both sides of the relationship and process appear as equally, if not more, important' (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2012: 207). As Collinson suggests, there is little research attending to the actual interactions between followers and leaders (Collinson, 2005: 1423), because leaders impact followers, and followers also impact leaders (Collinson, 2006).

It could be argued that if leadership is about relationships, then both leaders and followers are involved in leadership (Rost, 2008). To distinguish this combined relationship, Rost (1993) attempted to use other words for followers, focusing on the word *collaborators*, coining the term collaborative leadership: 'An influence relationship among leaders and collaborators who intend significant changes that reflect their mutual interests' (Rost, 2008: 57).

Another popular early piece of work that begins to address these relationships between leaders and followers from relational and entity perspectives is the Leader-Member exchange theory (LMX) (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995) that

considered the dyadic relationship between leaders and other members of a group. Despite its emphasis appearing to acknowledge both leaders and followers in determining the quality of the relationship, it continues to prioritize the leaders. The theory says little about followers influencing the leader-member relationship or the collective as a whole, but rather focuses on the leaders being open and trusting with 'in-group' followers, and distant with 'out-group' followers (Howell and Shamir, 2005). Moving on from LMX, Uhl-Bien¹⁷ (2014) is aware of the problems around the language of the LMX theory and its overemphasis on the leader as the primary individual, agreeing that the subject should be more about the 'space between' leading and following (Uhl-Bien, 2012: xiv). Leadership, therefore, is a collective activity and there is a need to consider it collectively. This connectivity of the individuals (followers and leaders) implies that 'actors must be consciously oriented to one another' (Ritzer, 2005: 265), thus for social interaction to be necessary, leaders and followers are required to consciously orient themselves with one another (Bratton, Grint and Nelson, 2005). This dyadic nature gives emphasis to the role of communication within the leadership process to ensure the quality of the social interaction between each individual.

Uhl-Bien first started to progress this discussion of collectivity and social interaction in her writings about Relational Leadership Theory (RLT), depicting an overarching framework for the study of leadership as a social influence process through which emergent coordination (social order) and change (values, attitudes, behaviors) are constructed and produced (2006: 654). Traditionally, relational leadership has been viewed as an entity perspective, separating and privileging

¹⁷ Mary Uhl-Bien speaking at the Collective Leadership Seminar, New York University, 25 April 2014.

leaders from followers, assuming they have a knowing mind, possessing the contents of their own minds, and as entities they can be distinguished from other people and the environment (Dachler and Hosking, 1995). Uhl-Bien (2006) argues that RLT begins to address both relationships as an outcome and a context for action, therefore more fully exploring the relational dynamics of leadership and organizing, that is the individual and their perceptions, intentions, behaviours, personalities, expectations and evaluations relative to relationships with others (Hollander, 1978; Uhl-Bien, 2006; Uhl-Bien et al, 2000). This working combination of both perspectives compliments and fills potential gaps that materialize when considering either perspective in isolation, understanding individuals within a broader collective of a process of leadership, and the relationships to enable the process to function. Kennedy et al., (2012) view RLT as bringing both perspectives ‘under one broad umbrella theory’ (199). As Uhl-Bien argues, ‘The “answer” does not lie in one side or another: it requires multi-paradigmatic approaches. To advance knowledge of relational leadership, we need to engage scholars across disciplines and perspectives’ (Uhl-Bien, 2012: xv).

Taking into account the more social interactive aspects of leadership as a process alluded to above, leadership scholars have recently been developing the more relational perspective, viewing leadership as a process of social construction (Uhl-Bien, 2006). This recognizes leadership wherever it occurs and is not just restricted to a single, individual formal or informal leader (Hunt and Dodge, 2000:48). The epistemological focus of social constructionism locates the meaning making in the spaces between the individuals involved in the process: ‘All knowledge... evolves in the space between people’ (Hoffman, 1992: 6).

Social constructionism is a reminder that individuals are not isolated islands; they are embedded in interactions with other individuals and groups of individuals continually influencing, enabling, constraining and engaging with each other (Shotter and Lannamann, 2002: 61). Where the entity perspective focuses on the individual leaders under the label of leadership, the micro level, the relational perspective operates at the macro level, highlighting the interactions through which leadership is socially constructed (Uhl-Bien, 2006), focusing on ‘the invisible threads that connect actors engaged in leadership processes and relationships’ (Ospina and Uhl-Bien, 2012: xx). A relational approach also tends to view knowledge as socially constructed and socially distributed (Dachler and Hosking, 1995), focusing on the shaping of this knowledge by the surrounding culture (Crotty, 1998) at a variety of levels, all dependent on social interactions and social networks (Fletcher and Kaufer, 2003). This perspective begins to loosen the distinction between leader and follower and considers leadership as distributed (Pearce and Conger, 2003) complex and interactional, shifting attention from the leader and/or follower to the ‘reciprocal relationship’ to study leadership in a more conceptual way (Huxham and Vangen, 2000; Shamir, Pillai, Bligh and Uhl-Bien, 2007). It has therefore been suggested that what is required is a dialectic understanding of the complex, interactional relationships (Collinson, 2005: 1425).

In a parallel critique, Fairhurst (2001) argues that studies in leadership typically concentrate either on the leader that overlooks the dynamics of the actual collective, or on the collective, neglecting the leader’s (or follower’s) actions. Rather than taking an ‘either/or’ approach to leadership research, she recommends

a 'both/and' perspective where the individual and the collective are viewed as represented elements. Fletcher (2012) agrees, suggesting that although the scholarly approaches of considering relational leadership as an entity theory or a constructionist theory are useful, in practice good leadership is increasingly conceptualized as the ability to work in and through relationships. Both ways are concerned with meaning-making, but with the meaning located differently, and there is more capacity for discussion and research to produce a dialogue between both constructivist psychological epistemological perspectives, and social constructionist epistemological perspectives than some scholars previously thought (Kennedy, et al, 2012: 176). An entity approach has an advantage in articulating leadership and the attributes required for a good leader, however it fails to identify or theorize implications of social processes through which a leadership narrative is created and maintained (Fletcher, 2012). Therefore, just focusing on an entity perspective is purely abstract and removes leadership from its context, presenting it as context-neutral. On the other hand, a purely relational approach is advantageous in focusing attention on the social processes and the construction of the leadership narrative, but it does little to identify the practical implications of how individual actors can exercise actions to resist and influence within a leadership process (Fletcher, 2012). No one single person can provide, and be successful at, leadership as an individual actor (Crosby and Bryson, 2005), when facing complex wicked problems (Grint, 2005a, 2005c, 2008, 2010) and adaptive challenges (Heifetz, 1994) which require the collective action of many from different aspects of complex networks. Organizational environments are complex social environments, with everyday challenging conditions such as scarcity, uncertainty, interdependence, diversity, participation and cultures

(Ospina and Uhl-Bien, 2012). Should we, therefore, be considering whether a different *type* of leadership is required to address these differing challenges being faced within organizational settings?

In Grint's (2005c) paper *Problems, Problems, Problems: The Social Construction of Leadership*, he defines the difference between management, command and leadership and attempts to confront the previous question by suggesting that the form of decision making varies depending on specific situations. His focus is on the processes of leadership to persuade and influence followers to undertake a required action that involves a social construction of the context, which in turn legitimates an appropriate action to represent the situation.

Grint (2005c: 1472-1473), supporting others (Bratton, et al., 2004; Zaleznik, 1977), also argues that leadership is strategic while management is more about the here and now and the application of appropriate tried and tested processes. Weick (1993) suggests management is similar to *déjà vu*, due to familiarity with, and possible application of, standard problem solving, whereas leadership is more about *vu jàdé* with regards to having never seen the problem before. Despite this defined difference, in most situations and organizations the leader/manager is expected to solve and have all the answers, regardless of whether they do or not. Grint associates this distinction between management and leadership with Rittel and Webber's (1973) typology of 'Tame' and 'Wicked' problems. A 'tame' problem is defined as being potentially complicated, however it can be solved with the application of appropriate processes. It is the role of the manager to support the application of these processes to solve the problem. These have a

tendency to be day-to-day situations that individuals are confronted with the majority of the time. ‘Wicked’ problems, on the other hand, are complex with no obvious solution. Possible solutions that are applied only create further problems; therefore there tends to be no right or wrong answer, just better or worse alternatives. ‘Wicked’ problems can be novel or recalcitrant, however they are subjectively defined. These types of problems provide high levels of uncertainty and are associated with leadership. The individual in authority may not have the answer and is therefore required to demonstrate leadership to engage collaboration with others and ask questions, not provide answers. Expanding on Rittel and Webber’s (1973) typology, Grint (2005c) defines a third set of problems as ‘critical’. A ‘critical’ problem is a self-evident crisis, with very little time to make a decision and therefore necessitating command: an individual in authority to provide the answer for the public good. This heuristic effectively demonstrates the social construction of a particular problem, legitimating the type of authority deployed by an individual to answer, process or question specific, situational problems.

Taking this stance on leadership as a process and construction of leadership depending on context Gergen (2009), suggests it may also be necessary to consider the individual as an entity discussing how the actor’s ‘reason, emotion, motivation, memory, experience, and the like – are essentially performances within relationship’ (397). He continues by suggesting ‘the view that those around us cause our actions. Others are not the causes, nor we their effects. Rather, in whatever we think, remember, create, and feel, we *participate* in relationship’ (397). From this argument, despite the entity and constructivist

perspectives bringing rich understanding and insightful ways of considering relational leadership a limited dialogue across perspectives, disciplines and methodologies has prevented a certain level of interplay (Romani, Primecz and Topcu, 2011). Therefore by considering the perspectives together rather than in parallel, and considering other disciplines, it has the potential of clarifying the interconnections between individual and relational dimensions of leadership (Ospina and Uhl-Bien, 2012), and thus offering insights to help the various actors in organizations face challenges (Vangen and Huxham, 2003). Overall, leadership consists of relational interactions between people: ‘Generally [to] enable groups of people to work together in meaningful ways’ (Day, 2000: 582).

With relational leadership targeting leadership as a process of collective capacity, it includes covering leadership not just in formal leadership contexts (i.e. manager and subordinate relations) but also informal leadership contexts (i.e. no formal authority and collective processes), and these contexts led the research to consider other social networks in the guise of social movements. Social movement theory and collective identity theories have the potential to consider the alleged concerns of bringing both perspectives of entity and relational together, and they appear to mirror opinions and concerns of vagueness between individuals and collectives (Gamson, 1992; Melucci, 1988, 1989; Opp, 2009; Snow and Oliver, 1995). To expand on the observations of Ospina and Uhl-Bien (2012), among other authors, and consider the entity and relational perspectives of leadership across disciplines, I now turn to consider social movement studies and the area of collective identity theory: Because social movements lack the authority structures that support conventional organizations in the business and public sectors and therefore

provide better tests for examining the processes involved in engaging leadership without authority, with individuals coming together engaged in a common purpose. Thus to explain how leadership works in the kind of political and organizational contexts I have empirically researched, I will now investigate whether social movement theory can fill this formal/informal authority gap and improve relations to encourage better engagement for more effective participation.

SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY AND COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

Establishing an identity or expressing self-realization is one of the goals of new social movements.

(Opp, 2009: 204)

Understanding collective action is about the recognition of many social ties which are necessary to engage an individuals' decision to actually participate (Gould, 1993). Social movements are about generating and sustaining the commitment and cohesion of these social ties between individuals over time, through this collective action, demonstrating an overall collective identity. However, within a collective Olson (1965) highlights the free-rider problem – disengaged actors – abstaining from contributing to the collective but benefitting from it. Therefore, social movements are dependent on allowing individuals an opportunity to display thoughts and decisions that motivate them to participate, avoiding the feeling of disengagement due to their contributions having little impact (Opp, 1989).

Taking into consideration 'participation' and 'engagement' and the difference between the two in the political engagement literature - engagement referring to a subjective state, a mobilized, focused attention on something, and participation presuming some degree of engagement - engagement is therefore a prerequisite for participation (Dahlgren, 2009: 80). So for an individual actor to be engaged and consequently participate in something, there must be a connection for an individual to feel empowered to contribute. Linking with Olsen (1965) and the free-rider problem, without some form of engagement, people will not necessarily participate, especially not fully.

The absence of engagement has often been expressed as the ‘resignation’ of those individuals who feel that the perceived ‘elitist’ [political] system does not include them or offer any, incentive for [political] participation, and leaves many feeling overwhelmed by powerlessness (Dahlgren, 2009) and exiting (Hirschman, 1970)

Associated with this sense of resignation, it has been suggested that groups and networks of individuals are ‘biodegradable’, meaning they form and consequently dissolve with regularity (Flesher Fominaya, 2010), because once they have accomplished what they have set out to achieve, or it is not satisfying the need of the collective, they dissolve and then may resurface in another form. This resurfacing is evident in the overlap of groups, networks, collectives, and social movements (for example, Della Porta, 2005; Flesher Fominaya, 2007; Rupp and Taylor, 1999). So, are disengagement and ‘resignation’ actually just individuals realizing that the collective has met its end goals or is it a result of the individuals becoming disengaged, and mentally resigning?

The nature of a social movement as a collective, along with its outcomes, requires taking into account the various individual actors acting in different ways. Some of these individuals will influence the environment they are in more than others, some will see opportunity where others do not, some will see resources that can be utilized, and some will frame situations the way others may not. A social movement can be viewed as a team that interacts under conditions where there is a confluence of social influences, which are more or less supported by the creativity of the individual members (Amabile, 1988, 1996; Hackman and Morris, 1975; McGrath, 1984). And it is within these social movements that the creativity of the

actors translate resources into power to achieve a common purpose, or as Ganz (2004: 181) proposes: 'How we turn what we have into what we need to get what we want.'

Considering some of the earliest work (Opp, 2009; Gamson, 2009) around the collective identity perspective of social movements by Melucci (1988, 1989), what can be learnt from the mobilization of individuals to achieve a common goal through shared resources? How can relations between these individuals – leader or follower – be better understood and utilized to initiate change, face challenges or improve working environments in collective contexts that lack the authority structures of traditional organizations? Can organizations become more effective through their members learning more about the relationships between each other as individuals, and by considering leadership and followership as complex processes that require constant weaving to learn, reflect, act and confront challenges? How do social movements actively engage their individual members to make a difference?

New social movement theories are one form of collective action (Buechler, 1995; Gamson, 1992; Hunt, Benford and Snow, 1994) and there are many variations. However, the more common themes include social movements as a common sphere of collective action (Cohen, 1985; Melucci, 1989); the importance of processes to promote autonomy (Habermas, 1984, 1987); they are socially constructed with regards to grievances and ideology (Klandermans, 1992); and it is recognized there are a submerged, latent and temporary networks that often secure collective action (Melucci, 1989; Mueller, 1994).

Despite the majority of early social movement, identity and framing perspectives being based around the qualitative work of Mead and Blumer from the 1930s (Opp, 2009), initial studies around the collective identity perspective were based around the new social movement theories predominantly written by Melucci (1988, 1989). Before the late 1980s there was very little consideration around the general sociological problem of what collective identity was (Schlesinger, 1987), though Durkheim, Marx and Weber all recognized its importance (Grint, 2005b). Alberto Melucci based his studies of the social movements of the 1980s on the writings by Touraine (1985) and Pizzorno (1978), criticizing the more traditional views of social movement theory that treated a collective as a unitary body.

Buechler (1995) comments in his writings on new social movements that society is shaped by information and signs, with collective action emphasizing the socially constructed nature of the world. Melucci's (1988) work provides the basis for this with his concern for the role of identity in collective action, especially how the pace of change in society affects an individual's inclination to become involved in collective action, and how this is coupled to their capacity to define an identity in the first place. In other words, Meluuci is stressing how important it is that collective action is nested in networks of other submerged groups.

However, it has been said that the concept of collective identity and therefore collective action is 'notoriously "slippery"' (Flesher Fominaya, 2010: 394), and there is no consensual definition (Snow, 2001). Some authors suggest collective identity is located within the individual (for example, Polletta and Jasper, 2001),

with it more commonly understood as something generated and created between individuals (for example, Snow, 2001), by a shared and interactive sense of 'we-ness'. Melucci (1988, 1989, 1995) rejected the idea of a collective identity being a given: it is trying to bridge the gap between individual beliefs and meanings alongside collective action.

Melucci (1988) consistently argues throughout that to consider the collective, you are required to consider the individuals alongside the multiple processes of them acting together. Within his work, he demonstrates his interest in 'Processes in which the actors produce meanings, communicate, negotiate, and make decisions' (1988: 331). Melucci is concerned about collective action overall, however his focus begins with the individuals. The phenomenon of a social movement is the result of joint individual action, with the individuals having a common goal to act accordingly to achieve that goal. His focus is therefore on the collectivity of individual actors.

Melucci's theoretical considerations propose that collective action is a dynamic reflexive process consisting of an overall result of purpose, resources, and limits that are orientated around constructed social relationships (1988: 332). It is the individual actors, he suggests, who 'produce' the collective action, by being able to define themselves and therefore define their relationship within the set environment. To add to the more traditional perspectives of social movements - a 'collectivity of individuals' (Opp, 2009: 36), an organization (McCarthy and Zald, 1977) consisting of a number of people (Toch, 1965; Zald and Ash, 1966), with common goals undertaking a joint action based on underlying networks (Tarrow,

1998), in organized efforts to bring about social change (Jenkins and Form, 2005)

- Melucci emphasizes that individuals contribute to a definition of 'we' not linearly but via a produced interaction and negotiation. For Melucci, the formation of 'we' is the beginning of a collective identity of an interactive and shared definition, constituted of individuals who are concerned with the orientations of their actions, alongside the opportunities and constraints where this action is taking place. He builds on this to argue collective identity is a negotiated process involving three underlying elements (1988: 343): 1. the formulation of 'cognitive frameworks' concerning the ends, means, and field of action; 2. the 'activation of relationships' between actors who interact, communicate and influence each other, and negotiate to make decisions; and, 3. the emotional investments that enable individuals to recognize themselves.

Despite these three dimensions clarifying collective identity within his writing, some authors criticize Melucci for being vague about his definition (Gamson, 1992; Opp, 2009; Snow and Oliver, 1995) due to collective identity often only being defined as a property of individual actors, with the words identity and identification being used interchangeably (Opp, 2009). This definition, for some scholars, does not clarify whether the collective identity is a property of individual actors, or a property of collective actors. Meluccci (1996) uses it as a concept to get at the mental worlds of the individuals which explains their participation because in order to devote time, ideas, and effort to a social movement or protest, people need to feel part of a larger collective that they think they can contribute towards and help. For the purpose of learning from social movement theory for this research, Melucci's (1988) definition of collective identity as a 'we-feeling'

supports the work of Ganz who also focuses on both the micro (actors as individuals – ‘story of self’) and the macro (the identity of the collective – ‘story of us’), and the understandings of shared common beliefs, common convictions, social ties, and emotional bonds.

Before analyzing the work of Ganz, it is necessary to discuss story telling, emotions, trust, and the location of responsibility when things begin to go wrong, when individuals can feel under pressure not to admit their mistakes for a fear of being blamed, and the consequences that go with it – disengagement, demotivated, silenced, fatalistic, loss of employment, and so forth.

STORIES IN ORGANIZATIONS

The basis of Ganz's 'Public Narrative' as the art of leadership storytelling is rooted in the power and usefulness of stories: stories of identity, stories for sense-making, and stories to share knowledge, experience and learning. First, it is important to define the difference between a story and a narrative due to scholars' differing opinions that not every story is a narrative, and not every narrative is just text (Gabriel, 2008: 194), then I will explore why Ganz believes the use of stories is so powerful in mobilizing individuals.

It is understood that narratives are texts, either written or spoken, that weave interconnected events together to form a plot by incorporating different characters (Gabriel, 2008: 194). The actual definition of 'narrative' has become intertwined and used interchangeably with the word 'story', with both being used as synonyms to refer to a statement that refers to individual events that are connected in some way (Denning, 2011; Polkinghorne, 1988). Another way to bring the two terms together is by considering the context and the moral, with a narrative allowing the construction of a powerful idea through a set of particulars which are required to form the story. The particulars of the story are constructed in a contextual situation with an underlying moral or specific point to complete the story, allowing a story to further be applied to a new situation or many other situations (Browning, 2005: 65). Some writers do give the two words differing definitions, with a story consisting of a protagonist and a plot, with an event leading to a resolution or a moral (Denning, 2011; Gabriel, 2000; Ganz, 2009b), and a narrative playing a part in everything that happens of any significance in human affairs (Denning, 2005: x). Others differentiate between the two terms by

defining a story in a broader sense as a ‘particular type of human communication designed to persuade an audience of a storyteller’s worldview’ (Sachs, 2012: 18), whilst a narrative is restricted to a narrower sense consisting of a story and a theme as told by a narrator – a theme being a layer added to the story to instill an emotional deeper meaning (Vincent, 2002: 58).

Taking these opinions into account, a narrative cannot be solely a text, or this would mean it could be a list, definition or label. By considering the various definitions, I will suggest that narratives are interrelated events or actions, all of which involve characters and revolve around a plot with verbs denoting what happened to the characters – the moral (Bruner, 1990; Gabriel, 2008). These are the three elements that Ganz (2009b) states defines a story. Denning (2011: 13) in his work refers to the common usage of both words as under a ‘large tent’, each holding many different meanings, and yet it is easier to distinguish a story from a narrative, with a story taking the form of a comedy, tragedy, romance, folklore, a novel, theatre, a movie, a soap opera, myth, gossip, and so on. For the purpose of this work, the two words will be used interchangeably so that, according to the above definitions, a narrative is constituted by the three elements that make a story: every story is a form of narrative, but it might be argued that not every narrative is a complete story.

As most children know, the opening line of a traditional story or fairy tale is the famous ‘Once upon a time...’ And so a story begins, with the full attention of the child. ‘Storytelling is an art of weaving, of constructing a delicate way of communicating that can easily break down into just a string of text and words.

Good stories are valuable – they entertain, explain, inspire, teach, convince, connect, and cross boundaries’ (Gabriel, 2000: 1). If told badly they hold the prospective of disappointing an audience, and used inappropriately they can offend the intelligence of an audience and demoralize it. If used appropriately and told with conviction, stories are able to bond the storyteller with a far more engaged audience. As Einstein once highlighted, ‘If you want your children to be intelligent, read them fairy stories. If you want them to be really intelligent, read them even more fairy stories’ (quoted in Zipes, 1979: 1). Bruno Bettelheim (1976) supports this by arguing that stories are vital in children’s development by enabling children to make sense of a threatening and seemingly cruel reality, reassuring them, stimulating them and entertaining them.

A story is not required to be long, eloquent or complicated, some may be fiction and others inspired by actual events. Stories are about engaging and moving an audience by offering them an experience or moment in time via the storyteller communicating feeling, insight and meaning. The more specific the details being recounted, the more listeners can be moved, and the more genuine and powerful the morals and values can be articulated. The actual relation to events can be tenuous because on occasions accuracy may be sacrificed for better effect (Gabriel, 2008: 282). The power that lies in storytelling is how they enable the audience to enter into a time and place with the storyteller, helping them see what the storyteller sees, hear what they hear, and stimulate strong emotions to feel what they feel: ‘On your imaginary forces work’¹⁸. This is all done through the three elements of a good story: plots, characters and twists.

¹⁸ <http://shakespeare.mit.edu/henryv/henryv.1.0.html>

The intention of a good plot is to arouse the curiosity of the audience, to get their attention and begin to build tension of the unexpected, the uncertain and the unknown. Curiosity is an instinct evident in human beings at all ages from infancy to adulthood, and is related to arousing inquisition, exploration and learning (Berlyne, 1954). It is a complex neuropsychological phenomenon, with sub-functions including attention, motivation and reward, memory and learning (Litman, 2005). The use of stories can address all of these sub-functions to help within organizational settings, by providing more novel and stimulating ways of demanding attention, presenting new information in a more emotionally positive format to motivate, and the more novel a story the more curious a person becomes, making it more memorable due to stronger associations with their emotions. All of these sub-functions can help facilitate learning amongst individuals, due to the integral role they all play (Costa et al., 2014).

The protagonist in a story is the main character who is confronting the challenge, having to make the choices and actions to achieve an outcome. The protagonist could be the hero of the story, overcoming evil and taking a difficult journey with many obstacles to achieve the outcome (Denning, 2011). It is this outcome which is where the learning of a moral becomes evident to the audience, due to the all too human weaknesses of the protagonist making it possible for the audience to identify with the individual: to feel and not just understand.

The moral is the learning opportunity within the story, and this is where the story communicates fear, hope, anxiety and happiness that can all be felt and related to

Quote taken from Act 1, Prologue – *Henry V*, William Shakespeare.

by the audience. It is this learning from the moral of a story that Ganz argues is the ‘power of story’ (2009)¹⁹. Almost all novels, short stories and children’s stories hold underlying teaching morals: right and wrong, hope over fear, self-worth and self-love, good versus evil. As Boje and Dennehy (1993: 156) summarize it succinctly: ‘Stories make experience meaningful; stories connect us with one another; stories make the characters come alive; stories provide an opportunity for a renewed sense of organizational community’.

It is for these reasons that scholarly interest in storytelling in organizations has accelerated since the 1990s, despite the subject of stories being studied since Aristotle and the *Poetics*, with Plato’s *Republic* attacking poetry for indulging emotions, prompting Aristotle to defend poetry (Gabriel, 2000: 10). It was Mitroff and Kilmann (1975) who began to draw attention to the way stories were able to capture and interpret an organization’s qualities and become the origins of meaning. On an individual employee level, stories can unravel deeper feelings, ambitions, disappointments, grievances, and motivations (Gabriel, 2008). On an organizational level, there are stories of symbolism that are part of the cultural life of the collective, but there is also the legacy of stories. Over the years, people tend to forget names and faces, however stories tend to remain in the memory (Gabriel, 2000) due to the plots, morals, lessons and the way they were told.

Within academic research, there are concerns and misgivings about the rapid increase in the popularity of stories in organizational research, with a tendency to consider every sign, extract of conversation, and every cliché as being a story or

¹⁹ <http://www.sojo.net/magazine/2009/03/why-stories-matter>, accessed 16 May, 2014

form of storytelling (Gabriel, 2000: 2). The word, as already mentioned in relation to stories or narratives, is at risk of being used to encompass all non-factual organizational communication. However, stories in organizations are being studied and written about in many ways (Boje, 1991, 1994, 1995, 2011; Czarniawska, 1997, 1999; Denning, 2011; Gabriel, 1991, 1995, 2000, 2008) including as elements of organizational symbolism and culture, as expressions of unconscious wishes and fantasies, as methods of organizational communication and learning, expressing political domination and opposition, or for drama and effect. It is becoming more widely argued that the truth of a story lies not in the facts, but in the meaning.

Work around organizational stories by Boje sees storytelling as a system – ‘the institutional memory system of the organization’ (1991:106). He does not see organizational stories consisting of fixed plots with fixed characters, but an oral or written performance between two or more individuals expressing meaning and interpretation to a past, present or future event (Boje, 1991: 111). He found there to be three outstanding characteristics that give stories this power: First they are reflexive by continually recreating the past according to the present, with various interpretations becoming stories; secondly they are interactive due to most stories being multi-authored with multiple characters, possibly with the various characters alternating between story teller and audience, adding their own interpretations, twists and nuances; finally they are dialogical, with the truth of the story lying not in any one variant, but consisting of a continuous flux, with contributed bits and interpretations.

In his more recent work, Boje (2001, 2011) has highlighted concerns in organizations attempting to silence or disprove stories, referring to the concept as ‘antenarrative’ – ‘a bridging of past narratives stuck in place with emergent living stories.... On the move.... shaping the future of organizations’ (Boje, 2011: 3-4). In comparison to this more postmodern approach to storytelling, in my experiences and to support stories in the work of Ganz, the more conservative definition of stories as proposed by Gabriel is the more appropriate and best fit in bringing individuals together to work more effectively. Gabriel defines stories as ‘narratives with plots, characters, generating emotion in narrator and audience, through a poetic elaboration of symbolic material’ (2000: 239). If people believe a story, if the story grips them, whether the events actually happened or not is irrelevant (Gabriel, 2000: 4). Gabriel (2000, 2008) argues that stories are not the only things that generate and sustain meaning, nor do all stories actually generate and sustain meaning: they can undermine and destroy meaning (negative rumors and gossip). He continues to argue that not all narratives are stories, and that factual and descriptive accounts of events that aspire objectivity rather than emotional effect must not be treated as stories. He has used his work to study leader-follower and group relations, therefore his definitions and findings support this work in a more constructive way. It is important to realize that not all stories are good stories, and not all storytellers are effective. Stories can interpret events, possibly through exaggeration by distorting the events, omitting bits and pieces, embellishing actions, all without obliterating the facts. Stories are about the power to generate and sustain meaning, which are unique both as social phenomena and as tools in social research.

Stories stimulate imagination and offer reassurance (Bettelheim, 1976), they provide moral education (MacIntyre, 1981), they justify and explain (Kemper, 1984), they inform, advise, and warn (Van Dijk, 1975), above all else they informalize the formal due to their historical links to folklore and entertainment, and therefore can be recreational (Gabriel, 2000: 9). Walter Benjamin (1968) views the story as the product of personal experience. Good stories represent a successfully met challenge, travelling easily, mutating along the way, and resurfacing in unexpected places in unexpected shapes, with poor stories being seen as personal failures on the part of the storytellers or as instances where meaning is drained out of discourse (Gabriel, 2000: 13).

In seeking to unmask the hidden symbolism and meanings of stories, they are broadly deemed to be interpretivist, as a method of expressing a deeper interpersonal social reality that tend towards emotion and desire as well as repression (Gabriel, 2000). When applied to stories, interpretivism concerns itself with a story's attachment to meanings, rather than their actual realities, by considering their symbolic margin of reality by giving clues about social and psychological realities. Stories have an exceptional ability to re-enchant the disenchanted, introducing wit and invention, laughter and tears, but above all they are memorable. As an organizational tool there is the potential for stories to be reduced to a mere fashion in organizational research (Gabriel, 2008), but on the other hand their importance is self-evident and their utility is boundless.

A more specific area of organizational storytelling moving towards the work of Ganz, is work by Jonathan Clifton (2014). He considers stories in organizations

from a leader's identity, consisting of 'big' stories – narrative life stories usually in interview, part of studying leadership and vision in organizations – and 'small' stories – stories embedded in talk-in-interaction, a site of identity construction, viewing them as something that is fragmented, fluent and dynamic (Bamberg et al, 2011; De Fina, 2006). It is these small stories, or narrative-in-interaction, which work via the give and take of social interaction. It is therefore not just something that a leader or individual speaker does, but it is something that all individuals do (Clifton, 2014). Sims (2003: 1196) examined how these individual identities are constructed, undermined and contested through the creation of stories about self and situation, with individuals proceeding to live some of them out. It is these stories that enable leaders and followers to position themselves considering the here and now, learning from the past and considering the future; almost taking the form of Aristotle's beginning, middle and (potential) end of a play. The identities of the characters (whether they are leader, follower or team player) operate at a proximal turn by turn level, with each person interpreting the situated identities and being able to influence and position themselves, manage the meaning of their role in the situation and potentially become better engaged within the given context, problem and overall process of leadership, requiring individuals to distribute and contribute their own perspectives and small stories. Or as the Chief Constable of British Transport describes them in his organization, they are 'camp fire stories'²⁰. They are what Alvesson and Kärreman (2000) refer to as little 'd' discourse which refers to the micro practices of talk and the processes through which various actors construct knowledge, experience, learning, emotion and identities that make up the organization. Clifton (2014:

²⁰ Quoted from an interview with Chief Constable Andrew Trott, British Transport Police - College of Policing, Bramshill, Hampshire 12/03/14

113) argues that considering the small stories in the study of leadership as an interpersonal process of relationships allows social scientists and those in the position of leadership and followership in organizations to ‘open up the black box of leadership.’

These small interpersonal stories Alvesson and Sveningsson refer to as the ‘extra-ordinarization of the mundane’ (2003b: 1435). In their paper rethinking the apparently trivial aspects of what leadership entails regarding the ‘mundane’, they focus on the importance of informal chatting and listening and the positive effects it has on the relationships with employees making people feel more respected, visible and included in the workplace. They argue it is the ordinary chatting and listening of leaders that is interpreted as extraordinary by followers that gives the more effective leaders and individuals ‘a special, emotional value beyond their everyday significance’ (1435). This is a similar idea of talk-in-interaction – the small stories – that Clifton (2014) was suggesting could enhance the position of leadership.

Alongside this discussion of informal chat, or small stories, is the other side of effective communication and interpersonal relations – listening. Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003b) include in their paper the importance of the ‘compassionate boss’ listening. They discuss how listening makes people feel part of the team, maintaining enthusiasm, facilitating understanding and positive delegation, in turn encouraging more effective decision-making, and reassuring people. They also stress how *not* listening has the potential of being the critical link between success and failure.

The two-way process of communication is a complicated social interaction within a domestic environment, and even more complex within any organization. Whether the organization is a government department, a hospital, a factory or an oilrig, relationships between individuals are subject to many extrinsic and intrinsic factors. Intrinsic factors could involve an individual's mood change due to some bad news from home, or good news for that matter; a lack of sleep due to a new addition to the family; or, moving house. Extrinsic factors could involve a lack of resources in work; not enough time in a pressurized situation; or conflict with another colleague. It is because of many of these pressures and human beings being so different, often temperamental and affected by so many phenomena that are beyond their control, that relationships are so very important, albeit complicated.

The complications of leader-follower relations working in hierarchies consisting of people from many backgrounds and cultures, different experiences and interests, has interested many writers in social studies to consider how to make these relationships stronger and more effective. And at the heart of this are emotion, trust and transparency.

EMOTION, TRUST AND TRANSPARENCY

Work by Norman, Avolio and Luthans (2010: 350) argued that a critical challenge for leadership is gaining and maintaining the trust of their followers. The starting point of their paper *The Impact of Positivity and Transparency on Trust in Leaders*, considers how trust is eroding in organizations due to corruption, unethical practices, mergers, spin, secrets, conversations ‘behind closed doors’, and so on. Work by Tourish et al., (2004) demonstrated the impact of negative events (in their paper it was organizational downsizing), and particularly how these events are dealt with by leaders, and directly impact upon the followers’ subsequent trust, and in turn the relationships. Similarly, Kasper-Fuehrer and Ashkansay (2001) noted that how a leader acts and communicates with everybody involved during difficult and challenging times can create a strong foundation for future trust – or not if it has gone badly for the leader.

Linked to trust and the effect on relationships, is the issue of emotions. Emotions, as referred to in the social movement literature (or arousal, as referred to in the field of psychology), is a subject matter within itself, varying significantly from individual to individual, discipline to discipline, all affecting the quality of learning and performance and how it is researched. Focusing on emotions in this work is restricted to how they have been interpreted within the social movement literature (for example, Adams, 2003; Gould, 2004; Hercus, 1999; Hetherington, 1998; Jasper, 1997; Melucci, 1988, 1989; Yang, 2000).

Work and writing by Hunt and Benford (2004) stresses the importance of emotions during the formation of collective identities and therefore relationships

between individuals, including solidarity and commitment. Positive emotional experiences facilitate keeping individuals engaged, even if goals aren't being met, or progress is slow and stilted, whereas, more hostile experiences easily dissuade participation, therefore damaging engagement. Supporting this, Flesher Fominaya (2010: 395) agrees that emotional ties between activists can keep individuals going through set backs, and help them overcome the negative emotions of repression. Emotions pervade all aspects of social life (Jasper, 2009), including interruption of daily routines, individual's responses to events, how an individual shapes their actions, and how emotions are learned and controlled through social interactions. Therefore, 'our relationship with other humans, even fleeting ones, are charged with emotions,' Jasper (2009: 180) argues that emotions are central to understand the 'collective corner of social life': 'They are the "glue" of solidarity' (Collins, 1990: 28), which can be described as, 'a socially prescribed set of responses to be followed by a person in a given situation' (Averill, 1980: 308).

The strength of trust during emotional and challenging times was made evident in an interview with the Mayor of Halifax, Canada – Peter Kelly²¹. In the opening fifteen minutes of the interview he highlighted how as Mayor he had had to contend with several emotive local disasters – an aircraft accident and severe weather among them. He expressed how for his second term, he won the election by a huge eighty-two percent of the vote (the largest majority vote in Canadian local election history), because the public had seen how he led during a disaster and therefore trusted and felt reassured about the way he did things. He did stress, however, that he was aware that every leader had a shelf life. Followers in

²¹ Interview conducted in November 2011 in Halifax, Canada.

organizations who feel trust towards their superiors, have been tied to more desirable performance outcomes including better job satisfaction and retention, resulting in greater commitment to the organization (Connell, Ferres and Travaglione, 2003; Corbitt and Martz, 2003) but what is trust?

Mayer, Davis and Schoorman (1995) consider it in a variety of ways. From the follower's stance trust is considered to be an expectation based on a leader's behavior; from a leader's perspective trust is defined as being rooted in the followers' perceived ability, competence and performance. From the perspective of an overall relationship trust is defined as an extended willingness to be exposed and take risks with another individual – working together.

Norman et al (2010) bring trust and communication together by considering openness and transparency. Open communication has been deemed by some to be the essential thread holding together the most effective of organizations (Gross, 2002; Haney, 1967; Likert, 1967; Rogers, 1987), however open communication is not necessarily achieved (Collinson, 2012; Dekker, 2011b), nor is it necessarily advantageous, as Argyris's (1986) work on 'skilled incompetence' suggests. The organizations that are successful in open communication tend to be associated with higher levels of honesty, effective listening, supportiveness and frankness (Rogers, 1987) – all the characteristics that work alongside the power of stories and the mundane tasks already considered. In turn, Rogers (1987) suggests that all of this is positively rooted in successful organizations, and has helped to minimize the impact of, and in some cases potentially avoid, organizational crises. For trust and open communication to be effective – even when using the power of

stories, whether they be small stories, mundane two-way conversations, or big stories - revolves around each individual in any organization at any level being receptive, and in return being responsive, to the information that is being provided by the others in the team, group or meeting. In the context of leadership, and the weaving of complex relationships, openness in communication requires the involvement of everybody – not just the leaders.

This exchange of information sometimes does require sensitivity, and therefore full transparency is a difficult task to achieve for leaders; indeed, full transparency is theoretically impossible to achieve because it is not clear what should not be included in the communication. There are also times when leaders are required to make the difficult decision to hold back some elements of a specific communication so as to avoid panic, rebellion, or further distrust. After all, shouting ‘fire’ in a packed theatre may increase casualties whereas telling the audience to ‘leave’ – and thus not be transparent – may be better for all. As Heifetz (1994) highlights, during times of distress followers will turn to their leaders for direction, protection and order. In these situations the leader and the follower are very much dependent on, and have expectations of, each other. If these problems are, as Heifetz refers to them, technical – therefore everybody knows what to do to tackle the issue – then the distress is minimal, and openness can be applied to all communication: everybody knows what is going on and why. However, when dealing with far more complex, wicked (Grint, 2005c, 2008, 2010), or adaptive problems (Heifetz, 1994), followers look to the leaders for answers that cannot be provided. It is at these times, when under pressure for answers, that leaders either offer the wrong solution, or fake the answer and skirt

around the issue being faced. In some cases, the situation then escalates and gets worse, frustration arises amongst the followers, they lose trust with their leader/leadership and may scapegoat them and start the process of looking for a new leader/leadership to offer certainty and meet the requirements of direction, protection and order. Heifetz (1994: 83) suggests that sometimes there is a need as a leader to 'fail their [the followers] expectations at a rate they can stand'. He suggests an element of openness can be achieved by trading off some expectations, while meeting others, maintaining a sense of order, remaining calm and in control, continuing to ask questions and challenge the followers to have a sense of belonging and involvement.

To be transparent in a relationship involves being candid and frank, easy to understand, direct and straightforward. Notwithstanding the complexities of leadership struggling to achieve any of these descriptions, relationships and people in general are not always straightforward, frank or easy to understand. Therefore to achieve a transparency in a relationship would involve admitting and communicating *everything*, hiding nothing, involving everyone, with no anonymity. In reality, transparency is a utopian dream but even openness can be difficult, especially when delivering bad news – what Heifetz calls 'cooking the conflict': 'regulating the levels of stress.... to keep it within a tolerable yet productive range' (1994:85). This metaphor nicely depicts the importance of being open in communication, releasing information as is necessary, being as honest as possible without lying and applying spin, but maintaining confidentiality if it is required. Does doing this encourage the construction of a relationship that takes the responsibility off a leader to be seen as the provider of

all the answers? Is it about encouraging those people involved to take personal responsibility - something that is often avoided, or at least diffused day-to-day by people across all organizations. Who is responsible in an organization? Who is accountable? Without relationships these lines can appear to be very blurred and the next section attempts to clarify the lines.

HUMAN ERROR AND PROZAC LEADERSHIP

Writers in the area of human error (Dekker, 2006, 2008, 2011a and 2011b; Reason, 1990, 1993, 1997; Rasmussen, 1985, 1986, 1990; Woods, 1988, 1990) consider the positions of accountability to lie within the remit of the leaders of organizations - those working at the 'blunt end' of practice, whilst the people with a personal responsibility are the practitioners at the 'sharp end' of organizations: those who are actually doing the job (Woods et al., 2010: 8-10). In safety critical organizations such as aviation, the sharp end is represented by the pilots, the air traffic controllers and the cabin crew, with those at the blunt end being represented by managers, chief executives, boards (e.g. Safety Regulation Group [SRG]) and regulators (e.g. Civil Aviation Authority [CAA]). Within the public sector, the sharp end consists of the police officers on the street, the doctor and nurse on duty, the social worker called to investigate a family. They are all responsible to the public, but those who are accountable for the sharp end doctor or nurse, and therefore accountable to the public, are those at the blunt end, whether they are the board of trustees of a hospital, the Chief Constable or the senior officers of a police force, the Chief Executive of a local council. Those at the blunt end are, in turn, all subject to scrutiny and legislation laid down by an even blunter end – Westminster.

To define this metaphor of the sharp end/blunt end further, Woods et al., (2010) considered work over the last thirty years looking into the success and failure of organizations. Studies show how the sharp end practitioners (followers, subordinates, personnel, employees) adapt the way they work to cope with the complexities of the processes they are subjected to, the targets they are required to

meet, and the ways they are managed and in some cases controlled. The strategies of the people working at the sharp end tend to be shaped by the resources and constraints that are initiated and imposed by the blunt end of the system. Much of the time, the sharp end people who are the professionals ‘just doing their job’ are successful in making the system work productively by matching procedures, rules, process, experience to situations they face. Part of this responsibility of ‘just doing their job’ goes beyond routinely following rules and process because through experience and appropriate training, they are able to resolve conflicts, anticipate hazards, cope with surprise, work around obstacles, detect and recover from miscommunications (Woods et al., 2010: 8). Much of the time, this can go unnoticed by the individual as it becomes routine, and it is not always appreciated by those at the blunt end. In fact, in many organizations there is a lack of appreciation in general about what is really happening at the sharp end, due to employees only telling the blunt end what they want to hear (Collinson, 2012); not the potentially bad news.

The blunt end provides the resources for the sharp end to accomplish what it needs to accomplish, but simultaneously puts constraints and pressures similar to budget cuts, impossible or inappropriate targets, kneejerk changes to process, and time pressures with regards to ‘I want it within the hour’. The consequence is often that the result of these decisions by the blunt end – the leadership – shapes and creates, and in some cases encourages, opportunities for errors at the sharp end – the followers (Dekker, 2006). However, those organizations that are classified as high reliability organizations often have a good record of potentially

reducing the risks of things going drastically wrong and resulting in disaster (Rochlin, 1999), but why?

Dekker (2008) argues that this success in reducing risk and disaster is not necessarily the result of how these organizations have perfect processes to avoid risk and reduce error, but how they successfully anticipate and plan for the unexpected, usually by working together. These organizations realize that knowledge is fragile in the face of potential hazards, and no individual is able to anticipate exactly what is going to happen at any one time. It is not what Dekker (2011b:12-13) refers to as ‘perfect rationality’ – an ideal world in which people have access to all information, clearly defined goals, and all the time they need to reach the right decision. Instead, to understand people’s decisions is to understand what is going on locally within the specific context at that moment in time, and the point of view of the assessments as to why a particular decision made sense at the time; what he calls the local rationality principle (Dekker, 2011b: 13). With ever increasingly complex worlds, perfect rationality – or objective rationality - is out of reach. As Dekker states, ‘There is not a single cognitive system in the world (either human or machine) that has sufficient computational capacity to deal with it all’ (2011b:13). Therefore in complex, changing organizations decision-making calls for judgments under uncertainty, ambiguity and time pressure; what is therefore locally rather than globally rational. What matters is what works at that moment in time, through the individual focusing their attention, applying their knowledge and experience, and anticipating the goal that is to be achieved. Dekker argues that due to the complexities in organizations caused by layers of process, unintelligible systems, and out of date rules, what might work well

locally can make things fail globally. All of this leads to why the relationships between leaders and followers – between the blunt end and the sharp end – of many organizations are so complex and yet so important, requiring better connectivity to minimize the costly effects of disengagement, blame, fear, and in the worst cases, sabotage and destruction – or as is referred to by Dekker, a ‘Drift into Failure’ (2011b:14). These negative and impersonal – sometimes kneejerk - reactions to failure that lead to the root causes of a blame culture, are almost never the result of bad performance; they are the result of bad relationships (Dekker, 2008: 142; Morreim, 2004).

The other reason for maintaining open relationships between leaders, followers and the many other audiences they encounter, is organizational learning. Stories are very powerful within this context, however, before their power can be utilized, individuals have to feel confident and comfortable to come forward with their errors without feeling threatened, blamed, or punished – in the worst cases, fired. Dekker argues that if an organization has no learning, no capacity for reporting the unintended, honest mistakes, then it is putting itself hugely at risk of disaster: a drift into failure. There are many examples that could be drawn upon to demonstrate this, but the two most widely reported in the media in recent years are the BP Deepwater Horizon incident on the 20 April 2010 (covered in more detail in the following chapter), and the Mid-Staffordshire NHS Trust deaths over the course of many years resulting in a public enquiry opening on the 8 November 2010 and the trust being dissolved in February 2014.

In parallel to the human error work of Dekker et al., is work by Collinson and his term 'Prozac Leadership' (2012: 87). Collinson begins by describing the ways in which leaders, followers and excessive positivity play an increasing part in contemporary organizations and societal practices (88). He uses the metaphor of the antidepressant drug Prozac to denote and symbolize the excessive positivity and the social addiction between followers and leaders to the idea of positive leadership as a way to enact power, influence and identity. Using the concept of Critical Leadership Studies to explore how power and identity can be enacted in open, subdued, and sometimes invisible ways within leadership as a dynamic process, and not in the same manner as more mainstream leadership literature, he argues, that it is taken for granted that the leader, as the individual with authority, has all the answers and therefore abilities to make the better decisions, whilst the followers are submissive and just carry out orders. The writing in the areas of positive leadership, authentic, charismatic and transformative leadership (Avolio and Luthans, 2006; Bernstein, 2003; Burns, 1978, 2003; Cameron, 2008; Carnegie, 1994; Gardner et al, 2005, 2011; Hannah et al, 2009; Luthans, 2003; Luthans and Yousef, 2007; Norman et al, 2010; Peale, 1952; Yukl, 1999), and conversely the dangerous obsession of positive leadership (Ehrenreich, 2009) encourages optimistic bias (Cerulo, 2006) and limits people's ability to envisage worst case scenarios. In turn, this undermines preparedness and almost invites disaster: what Ehrenreich (2009) calls 'brightsiding' potentially leaving organizations 'blindsided' (quoted in Collinson, 2012: 90). He cautions that over-positive narrative and discourses have the potential to simultaneously hide and obscure the issues with top-down control. When taken to excess, it becomes what he calls Prozac Leadership with five underlying principles: 1. There is a

reinforcement of the leaders' reluctance to address difficult problems and situations, dismissing bad news and future difficulties, consequently leaving little or no space for questioning; 2. When things go wrong, the leaders are constantly surprised and not prepared; 3. By encouraging only upward positive communication, followers feel silenced and unable to question or debate, in turn discouraging followers to raise concerns or acknowledge mistakes; 4. Leaders who constantly communicate positive narratives that are disconnected from realities, only fuel the distrust, suspicion and skepticism, damaging open and honest communication and learning; 5. This lack of open and honest communication only increases the possibility that lessons will not be learnt; therefore mistakes will be repeated, putting the organization at risk of disaster.

These characteristics of a Prozac Leader or style of leadership within an organization, especially the reluctance for a leader to listen to followers' concerns, only causes a chasm to be created between the leader and follower. The wider this chasm gets, the more disconnected from the organization the follower will feel, the less engaged, the less appreciated, viewing the leadership to be insincere and manipulative. Prozac Leadership is therefore likely to generate a range of negative responses amongst the followership of an organization. The ways that these subordinates find to express their distrust and dissent can be through any manner of destructive and rebellious outputs. Methods used could include strikes, working to rule, restricting output, whistleblowing, and as a last resort, sabotage. Despite some organizations, especially the high reliability organizations discussed in the work by Dekker (2006, 2008) and Rochlin (1999), realizing the benefits of constructive dissent and encouraging the members of their organizations to

challenge leaders, organizational procedures and report unusual situations, others in organizations strongly oppose it. They argue that upward critical communication is dangerous (Tourish and Robson, 2006; Collinson, 2006), because those who whistleblow and speak truth to power are at risk in an organization (Alford, 2001), and those followers who are negative or critical tend to be labeled as ‘whingers’ with their courage being redefined as betrayal. All of these negative responses to ‘truth to power’ have damaging effects, making followers fear for their reputation, their career or even the risk of being fired – all leading back to the blame culture debate discussed earlier in this section, and the importance of open relationships.

So are there any positive examples of leaders maintaining a viable relationship with their followers that supports both collective goals and facilitates constructive dissent, and if there are how do we explain their success? To answer this we need to summarize this literature review by turning to Marshall Ganz and his work in reflecting on his practical experiences in mobilizing social movements to produce his theories of Public Narrative, leadership and the encouragement of a story of self, us and now to initiate appropriate action(s).

A GANZIAN ANALYSIS: PUBLIC NARRATIVE AND THE STORIES OF SELF, US AND NOW – AN OVERVIEW AND CRITIQUE

In his work, Ganz defines leadership as being about enabling others to achieve purpose in the face of uncertainty. Similarly to Grint (2000, 2005) and Heifetz (1994), Ganz suggests that when there is certainty, when you know what to do, leadership is not necessary. It is when you do not know what to do that the art and creativity of leadership matters. There is no formula or prescription, no magic wand or fairy godmother, therefore it matters even more when enabling and engaging others to work together to achieve a common purpose in the face of uncertainty and times of challenge, to act appropriately and learn from these actions for the future. Ganz's work brings together the discussions in this literature review, and provides a strong foundation to build out of the empirical data, using Grounded Theory Method, to present a proposed framework in the subsequent chapters.

Marshall Ganz²², based at the faculty of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, has translated his twenty-eight years of personal experiences in social movements and political campaigning by documenting, analyzing and teaching his work. His academic first hand writing considers the practical encounters he faced and forms a culturally-orientated understanding of mobilizing social movements. His work around leadership and public narrative has been applied across public services in the United States, especially with regards to organizational work during Barak Obama's presidential campaign in 2008 (see appendix 7).

²² <http://marshallganz.com>
http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic115996.files/2_0.pdf

Ganz's practical knowledge and experiences in his work, rather than the more traditional theoretical approaches to academic writings, imbues his writing with practical utility. As Karl Marx (1970) viewed his own work, Ganz's intention is not to interpret the world, but to change the world. Ganz came to realize that much of his academic writing stemmed from his upbringing – his father was a rabbi and his mother a teacher - alongside his early experiences living in Mississippi. During these times he learnt that inequalities in employment, education, health, housing and criminal justice grew out of far deeper inequalities in political, economic and social powers. Working with Cesar Chavez during the Californian grape strike in the 1960s and playing a part in establishing the Farm Workers Union, Ganz noted that if deep change was to take place, relying solely on outside intervention was insufficient; it would take mobilization from the inside. How this can be achieved, he suggests, is through organizing.

In his work on how to mobilize, lead and engage, he argues it is about organizing, not commanding or providing people with the answers. Organizers, in Ganz's experiences, first consider who their people are – their resources – and do not immediately leap to what the issue is. Many leaders take the role of a commander (Grint, 2005c) and act 'now' without due consideration to what the issue actually is, taking a risk that the wrong answer and resources will be applied to the wrong problem. Organizers, in Ganz's work, consider a situation as a collective problem, therefore mobilizing participants to come together to learn, collaborate and act towards a common purpose. In a Harvard Kennedy School of Government interview in March 2014, Ganz elaborates on organizing being about building the combined resources of individuals to create a new capacity that was

not necessarily there before, through the combined power of their relationships²³. How this is achieved, Ganz suggests, is via four leadership practices: relationships, storytelling, strategizing, and action/learning. For this piece of work, the focus will be on his use of storytelling and the story of self, us and now, and how to build relationships to achieve engagement for action and continued learning.

The building of relationships in organizing, Ganz (2011) argues, is grounded in civic relationships, created by mutual commitments that are necessary to support collaboration. In his various writings, he discusses how building relationships goes beyond the basics of the delivery of a message, extracting contributions or soliciting votes, and is more about creating ‘social capital’ on which a community, organization or group rests. Social capital is a relational capacity to facilitate the collaborative action of all kinds needed to mobilize and initiate change and Ganz uses the term with regards to the collective benefits as a resource for public good. Putnam (1995) suggests social capital enables cooperation and mutually supported relations in communities, allowing for individual actors to have improved individual access to information, skills and a degree of engagement and empowerment to make a difference.

In Ganz’s chapter *Leading Change: Leadership, Organization, and Social Movements* (2010), he expands on, and looks deeper into, the foundations and social constructs of relationships that are built during social movements. He begins by clarifying that during the inception of a social movement there are no

²³ <http://hkspolicycast.org/post/80778621884/hks-senior-lecturer-marshall-ganz-a-long-time>, recorded 26 March 2014, accessed 12 May 2014.

obvious formal structures, with relationships more than likely being new. The individuals who initiate the movement become the informal leaders who start by forming particular interpersonal relationships to form links and networks with other individuals to build the organization. In these social movements, Ganz suggests, it is 'the voluntary commitments people make to one another [that] create the fabric from which formal structures may be woven' (2010: 513). The new relationships are constructed by continuous exchanges of resources and interests between the individuals involved. Ganz suggests that this continuous exchange only becomes a relationship when a mutual commitment is made for a shared future, taking into account mutual interests, mutual resources, and mutual understandings. In this suggestion, he also considers the obvious practicality of everyone having a past, and that a commitment to a shared future should also involve the consequences of a shared past to facilitate the transformation of what could just move beyond an exchange between involved individuals, to a relationship.

Within social movements, and in other contexts, relationships should be viewed as beginnings and not endings. Thus allowing the creation of opportunity for common interests to grow, facilitate change, and nurture development. Ganz suggests that this exchange between individuals (discussed later in his work via the use of storytelling) allows the participants to discuss all resources, knowledge and experiences, whether relevant at the time or not. The possibly irrelevant information may, over time, become relevant, therefore the exchange at the dawn of the relationship creates the potential for new forms of exchange to better develop relationships in the long term. The other positive outcome of this

participant exchange is the potential for individuals involved to discover common interests of which they were unaware, all of which contribute to participants developing strong interests in the relationship overall, helping to develop the 'social capital'.

There are considerable aspects of the writings of Ganz that start to address the importance of relationships, especially with regards to viewing the invisible and fragile threads that connect individual participants who find themselves engaged in leadership and relationship processes. As some of my own data from the work problems collated during facilitated teaching sessions of middle to senior managers demonstrates, it is common that no one single person can provide leadership acting alone (Crosby and Bryson, 2005) and to do so, especially with regards to complex, wicked (Grint, 2005c) and adaptive challenges (Heifetz, 1994), requires the collective actions of many people. This is similar to how Ganz describes the aim of the mobilization of participants within a social movement: to forge relationships with one another as peers that are more significant than between leaders and leaders, and leaders and followers.

Although social movements have a clear beginning, usually starting with a number of passionate individuals, they have no formal hierarchical structure or individuals in positions of formal authority. In contrast, the relationships in most public and private organizations have been constructed around formal, sometimes historical, hierarchical structures with formal leaders, not always sharing mutual interests or understandings. To start from the beginning is not possible in most organizations due to the complexities of large numbers of employees, cultural

webs, bureaucracy, regulations, processes, layers of management, etc. However, organizations are also constructed around growing sub-teams, temporary project teams or specialist working groups, consisting of individuals temporarily coming together to face specified challenges and organizational issues. Occasionally these new teams, new partnerships, or in some cases take-overs, could benefit from the teachings of social movements to enable stronger interpersonal relationships to encourage emotional investment (Melucci, 1988) between individuals sharing stories of self (Ganz, 2009b) during new beginnings.

These interpersonal relationships between individuals as peers within social movements are necessarily critical for weaving together the shared understandings, commitments and interests. This initiates collaborative action that creates a movement which is potentially easier to develop here because voluntary movements consist of individuals who usually have a strong calling and want, and therefore a passion, to be part of the collective. Individuals that come together in social movements tend to know what they want, albeit with some differences, and they set out together to get it. In an organizational setting, some may be there for a vocation, others are there for a career, and others are there to solely earn a living. Each individual therefore constructs differing motivations and purposes for involvement, unlike the common purpose and strong motivations of a social movement. Due to its voluntary nature, a social movement is also far easier to opt-in or opt-out. A work organization, on the other hand, is not necessarily voluntary, therefore if an individual opts-out there is usually a consequence to this action, and in a worst case scenario the loss of the job. Can organizations learn from how Ganz's experiences and thoughts of instilling hope and stories of self, help to

better understand what motivates individuals to form the groundings for stronger relationships and the story of us?

Ganz is fully aware that the challenges in doing this, especially across the boundaries of race, class, culture, religion, generation, geography and ethnicity, are considerable. These challenges, he suggests therefore, are rarely successfully addressed, with effort required to build relational resources as central to the relationships within social movements. He appreciates that this is difficult for those entering into new relationships, but also those involved in sustaining and maintaining old ones. Within social movements, it is about building scale, therefore leaders at all levels are recruited to take responsibility, to cast a wide net to recruit others to get involved in the work of the movement, creating space and opportunity for training, and continuous opportunities to coach and support recruits development.

Social movements differ from more traditional organizations with recruitment consisting of passionate volunteers to build scale. Organizations consist of a finite number of employees but within a social movement, each individual knows they have a personal responsibility to make a difference. In the organizational context there is still the issue of responsibility, but individuals are not always aware of the boundaries of who has responsibility for what, with a lack of clarity being communicated by those at the blunt end.

To conclude, Ganz states that relational work provides the foundations which can only be conducted effectively, and to the scale required, by many leaders taking

responsibility to build further leadership capacity through focusing on the importance of relationships, common interests and common resources. How successful leadership achieves this, in his view and experience, is through the telling of the story because a social movement is capable of telling a new ‘story’: Ganz refers to this learning of how to tell a story as *Public Narrative*, the outer core of leadership practice which is the essence of social movement capacity.

Public Narrative is about the emotional, moral and learning resources that can be provided through the power of telling stories. Research into organizational storytelling has been discussed earlier in this literature review when considering the use of stories and narrative in the work of many other scholars (Boje, 1991, 2001, 2011; Czarniawska, 2004; Denning, 2005, 2011; Gabriel, 2000, 2005, 2008; Weick, 1995). Ganz (2011) agrees with these scholars with regards to allowing the stories of moments and outcomes to become resources to help with teaching. He suggests that stories are used all the time in families, faiths, cultures and nations because everybody has an ability to identify empathetically with the protagonists – the characters. This helps individuals experience the emotions of the protagonists to move hearts on why to act, alongside minds on how they could act; individuals become interested and engaged in the plot that captures their imagination and supports a desire to interact with the others involved.

Ganz (2008) suggests that storytelling is a relational process, because it is how individuals interact by sharing values and experiences, how they counsel and comfort each other, and also inspire each other to make a difference and take action. Within social movements, Ganz (2010, 2011) suggests the use of a *Public*

Narrative depicts a story of self, us and now, to communicate why ‘I am’ called to act, ‘why we’ are called to act, and ‘why we’ are called to act now²⁴. His thoughts and ideas behind *Public Narrative* are discussed next in greater detail, starting with how emotions can inhibit (fear, apathy, inertia, self-doubt and isolation) or facilitate (urgency, hope, anger, solidarity and making a difference) action within social movements.

When faced with a challenge requiring action, Ganz suggests the questions ‘why’ and ‘how’ are considered. The how question, Ganz suggests, is answered analytically with regards to resources, costs, opportunities, skills, and so on. The why question, however, requires a narrative that explains why it matters, why we care, why this way and not that; but we also have to think about why we *need* to act, not just why we *ought* to act. The narrative provides the emotion and motivation to mobilize the act, and confirms the values to support the need to act. Ganz concludes the importance of narrative by summarizing that in the absence of emotion, values cannot be experienced and it is the values that orientate individuals into the choices that they have to make, to create and produce the action.

Building on why emotions can inspire individuals to act or not to act, Ganz refers to the work of the political scientist George Marcus (2002) who considers two of the human mind’s neurophysiological systems: the surveillance system, that compares what is expected to be seen with what is actually observed against any unusual, unexpected inconsistencies that could potentially cause anxiety; and the

²⁴ www.newstatesman.com, ‘We can be actors, not just spectators’, July 2012, accessed 29 April 2014

dispositional system, that considers an individual's temperament at the time, taking into account the level of enthusiasm, or as Ganz prefers to refer to it, the move from despair to hope. Marcus (2002) argues in his writings that without the surveillance system giving an individual an emotional cue, they would just always act out of habit. However, when anxiety is experienced, it ensures attention: something is not right and action needs to be taken. Ganz consider the two systems by linking the emotions anxiety (surveillance) and despair (disposition) to when a person's fear or rage would promote inaction. He suggests that these types of extreme emotions would inhibit action, therefore being a barrier and not a catalyst to get things done. To facilitate action, on the other hand, requires the other end of the disposition spectrum – hope – that would allow a person's curiosity to be awakened. This hopefulness allows new ways to be explored to facilitate learning, creative ways to look at the challenges being faced, and the intended action. Taking this neurophysiological research and applying it to his practical experiences of working with social movements who need hope if they are to believe they can make a change, Ganz argues that the capacity for action, but action with consideration, depends on how people feel emotionally.

Why some of these emotions create a catalyst for action and others a barrier, Ganz believes, is due to some emotions being more appropriate to capture a person's curiosity and attention. For example, urgency, he suggests, creates space for new action due to priority rather than time, and it takes commitment and focused energy to launch anything new. Therefore the creation of a feeling of urgency can be a way of getting a process for action started. Apathy, on the other hand, linked to Ganz's use of the word inertia regarding inactivity, can stop action in its tracks,

or stop the process for action before it has even begun. To counter apathy Ganz suggests anger, not rage, but constructive anger. He suggests it is how an individual feels when their morals or values have been violated. Rage may stimulate action, but Ganz interprets it as a violent negative action. Referring to the work of Gamson (1992) in this area, apathy and anger can be described as an injustice frame versus a legitimacy frame – the difference of what ought to be and what is. In summary, tapping into, and understanding, a person's morals and values has the potential of being a catalyst to action.

The ability to give people the emotion of hope usually involves convincing them that something is possible, even if it feels like it is impossible. Ganz (2010: 518) suggests 'credible solutions' are useful to give a person hope. By this, he not only suggests reports of successes elsewhere, but also direct experience of small successes. This idea of small successes is not new and reflects Weick's (1984) idea of 'small wins' to help collectives make sense of the larger, more complex problems they face. Weick defines a small win as 'A series of concrete, complete outcomes of moderate importance to build a pattern that attracts allies and deters opponents' (1984: 40). Within his work he talks about the overwhelming issue of social problems and how this stalls innovative action due to bounded rationality and the 'arousal' of those involved being raised to a level where they become frustrated and helpless (1984: 40). The way to overcome social problems and generate an arousal of hope, in Ganz's experience, is through relationships, because people can inspire hope in each other and support each other, therefore creating solidarity for action, not isolation.

Social movement leaders are able to use these ‘credible solutions’ or ‘small wins’ to counter self-doubt in others, by using them to inspire hope and instil a sense of individuals being able to make a difference – what Ganz refers to as YCMAD (You Can Make A Difference) (2010:519). It is about framing any action into what we *can* do, rather than focusing on what we *cannot* do. The ability of a leader to instil recognition through giving individuals’ personal responsibility to make a difference implies that recognition based on real outcomes, on what really matters, rather than empty flattery and lack of trust, is likely to be more effective. Giving people a sense of responsibility provides people not just with hope but also solidarity, and solidarity also comes from meetings, uniforms, shared language, informal gatherings, social events and even celebrations (Ganz, 2010:519).

Having now discussed in some detail the importance of emotions within social movements to initiate action, rather than inhibit it, Ganz also writes extensively about the power of storytelling in organizing and leading social movements. As Theda Skocpol²⁵, suggested,

Drawing on a lifetime of experiences in efforts ranging from the civil rights and union movements to grassroots organizing for Barack Obama, Marshall Ganz tells us how the apparently less powerful can mobilize change to challenge the powerful and create social change.

And he does this in most of his writing by using the power of his own story of self.

²⁵ Quote taken from a comment made about Ganz’s 2009 book, *Why David sometimes wins: Leadership, Organization, and Strategy in the California Farm Workers Movement*.

Ganz approaches the world of storytelling and narrative as a tool to make sense of the purpose of the movement, rather than using it as tool for analysis. Not, then, just for rhetorical purposes, or as part of talk-in-interaction (Clifton, 2014; Georgakopoulou, 2006), but as a way of encouraging leaders and individuals as *self*, alongside the participants collectively as *us*, to tell an autobiographical kind of story: a story that communicates non-shared, personal experiences and past events. These personal stories of the leader and other individuals (*self*), developing into the story of the collective (*us*) engage people who are infinitely curious to learn in a language of stories that enable everyone to communicate values to one another. His ideas of using stories in this way could be argued to be part of the third wave of narrative analysis – ‘the age of identity’ (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005: 608), with the first wave considering the narrative of text developing into the second wave of narrative-in-context (Georgakopoulou, 2006).

The starting point for a leadership story is an opportunity for the leader to tell the story of why they have been ‘called’ (Ganz, 2010: 523). Ganz suggests this calling is essential for leaders to deliver a message to the others to clarify their personal values that define them as an individual. This is not to be an abstract message, but an actual lived experience; small stories constructed around ‘choice points’ (Ganz, 2011: 283) which are times in a person’s life where they have faced a particular challenge, made a difficult choice, achieved a particular outcome, and/or learned a moral or value. Ganz understands that people tell others about the personal values that motivate them to act by selecting particular ‘choice points’ and recounting them in the format of a story which is part of the construction of a leader’s identity – narrative-and-identity (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005: 608) or

narrative identity (McAdams, 2008; McAdams and Pals, 2006). In short they tell their journey through life so far; a form of personal verbal text from which experiences can be taught and learnt from (Hammack, 2008).

In writing about the story of self, Ganz is fully aware that many people – whether leaders or participants – do not want to talk about themselves too much, because they assume no one would be interested in their personal stories, let alone care for their experiences. However, contrary to this, Ganz insists that leaders involved in public work are therefore subject to public and media scrutiny, and have a responsibility to articulate a personal account of who they are, where they are from, why they are here and where they are going. He suggests that if the public leader does not clarify this personally, others will just interpret who they are in ways that are not true, accurate, or not appropriate. The media and other people have the potential to make sense of a leader and their situation by drawing on other experiences of people who they assume are like this individual and producing inaccurate accounts that could be the trigger for propaganda, producing the wrong messages for the wrong reasons. Ganz quotes Aristotle's argument for rhetoric, the use of written or spoken language through persuasion and considers the three components of logos, pathos and ethos, with logos being the logic of the narrative, pathos being the emotion of the narrative, and ethos the credibility of the story. For a story of self to be credible, the person who is telling the story has to demonstrate ethos – credibility.

The importance of delivering the *story of self* can also be understood through the

concept of the synopticon²⁶. Thomas Mathiesen, one of many theorists to expand on Foucault's notion of the panopticon (originated by Jeremy Bentham as a design for a prison where the few watch the many), called his concept the *synopticon* - which in a sense reversed the panopticon - because modern mass media allows the many to watch the few. Mathiesen, writing in 1997, referred mostly to the way television allows tens of millions of viewers' access to a relatively small number of celebrities on a consistent basis, in addition to following their highs and lows in traditional news media. Now, almost two decades later, some would argue that the Internet and social media has exponentially magnified the concept of the synopticon. If leaders – the few - do not deliver their own personal stories of self to the masses, as with celebrities, they will find their highs and lows translated and interpreted in ways that are inaccurate, damaging and in some cases career ending.

The final explanation discussed by Ganz (2008, 2010, 2011) around the importance of a public leader telling the story of self, is the learning and sharing of this story. Social movements involve participants learning to tell new stories of self as they interact with others, and these can be challenging at times due to stories consisting of a combination of different messages; both of hope and pain. An individual's journey through life is not always easy, with obstacles and crises, alongside happy experiences, all being overcome or accepted, teaching lessons along the way. These teachings, Ganz (2008) suggests, provide individuals with opportunities to teach the text of their own lives. On a personal level the leader telling the story of overcoming obstacles, challenges and pain, can find it difficult

²⁶ Jeff Marker, 2011
<http://jeffwmarker.wordpress.com/2011/02/28/lindsay-lohan-star-of-the-synopticon/>

due to possibly not talking about it previously, or feeling it is not appropriate to share with others. Ganz (2011) argues that to make sense of why a leader is doing what they are doing, the story of pain is as important as the story of hope. Omitting these more delicate, personal stories could leave the story of self, being less authentic, revealing gaps in a person's personal experiences. In any learning, it is as important to share the stories of pain, as it is the stories of hope (Polletta, 2006).

The next step within *Public Narrative* is the story of us. Everyone's stories are combined and influenced with many fragments of other peoples' stories. Ganz therefore continues his discussion on the power of stories, by building on the individual stories of self, obviously including the stories of family, community, movements, organizations and nations, all interwoven and created out of the many threads of the individual's stories. By bringing the leadership story of self into the frame, there are points of intersection that provide a focus for a shared, collective story – the story of us, which surfaces the values that mobilizes the community.

The story of us, in Ganz's experiences in social movements, allows the question of 'why are we here' to be answered. It is an opportunity for a social movement, as a community, to communicate what values and experiences they share. Ganz suggests that many people work in organizations for years without an 'us' because they do not share stories. In many of the examples and conversations during the research undertaken for this project where people expressed what was causing them problems at work, it was lack of engagement and the inability to work together, especially across departments that kept being raised. An explanation

could be there is no story of *us* for them to encourage discussion, debate and openness. Ganz (2011) suggests that organizations that lack a story of any kind, lack an identity or shared values, a culture that cannot be articulated and drawn on to motivate and inspire individuals. A starting point to build a story of 'us' is a problem for many organizations, because it requires the organization to decide who the 'us' is. For a social movement, Ganz argues, this is easier because it starts as a new organization, with new relationships and new learnings. For more established organizations and older working relationships this could prove a difficult task, and this might explain why older and larger organizations have such difficulty in engaging people.

Deciding on the story of 'us' is about what the values of the organization that shape the identity 'we' are, and which are the most relevant to the situation at hand. Building on the theory of how stories are useful to teach, Ganz (2011) discusses how these stories also aid in teaching, how they help distinguish who the organization is compared to who the 'others' may be, therefore reducing uncertainty about expectations from the community as a whole. With stories of 'self' inspiring hope, Ganz also suggests collective stories can inspire hope or generate despair. Organizations, communities, families and faiths are rife with stories that teach about challenges that have been faced, how these challenges were overcome, and how people worked together to accomplish these challenges. These stories are built on values and help understand shared goals.

Thus stories of 'self' overlap with the stories of 'us'. Everyone is involved in one-way or another with a story of 'us': family, professional bodies, community

projects, sports teams, faith groups, political parties, or the nation. In many of these groups, the story of us expresses values, and experiences, and distinguishes one community or group from another (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). Within social science, Somers (1992, 1994) has referred to this story of 'us' as a collective identity. Social movements demonstrate this through the storytellers interpreting shared experiences for all involved, which Ganz sees as a critical leadership function for the new experience of the movement. Organizations that do not demonstrate this have people who interact little, do not arrive early, do not linger after work to be social, do not eat lunch together, and therefore will never have a story of 'us'.

After building on 'who am I' as your leader, to 'who are we' as a collective that can make a difference, the next part of the story of leadership within Ganz's *Public Narrative* is the story of 'now' – articulating the challenges that we face now. It highlights the urgent challenges being faced; the threat to the shared values, questioning the risks, combined with what action needs to be taken as a collective shaping any desired future. As a group where all involved are the characters of the story, the choices to be made are the collectives to make together, with the storyteller amongst the group articulating the challenge as a choice which requires the stories of self and us to be drawn from, to use the common values to offer hope and vision that all can share to begin the journey forward. From this, Ganz delivers the story of 'now' in his work as being set across the past, present and future: past experiences of 'self', woven with others to provide a tapestry of 'us', to move forward into the future as a collective with common purpose to face 'now'.

It is combined with the story of now that Ganz argues strategy comes into play and overlaps. Combining strategy as a key element linked to the emotion of hope in mobilizing individuals within a social movement, strategy builds a realistic and credible vision with 'how to get from here to there' (2011: 287). This vision, or 'choice' as Ganz refers to it, cannot be something trivial or something that is from a corporate list of values, but it should embody meaningful choice that all commit to and understand as being specific, not abstract. A vision can unfold a chapter at a time, according to Ganz (2011: 287), by taking the format of small victories, or small wins (Weick, 1994). These could be when a number of people actually turn up to take part in a meeting or the commitment of an influential person showing support for change. Whatever it is, a small victory or win demonstrates that change is possible to become a source of hope, as long as it is interpreted as part of the bigger picture. Ganz warns that encouraging hope is not about lying about the facts, but ensuring there is meaning given to the facts (2011:287) - openness.

Moving on from the story of 'now' is the necessity for action. In his writing Ganz incorporates 'action' within the story of 'now'. With the story of 'why' overlapping with the possible strategy of 'how', there is a need for credibility. This means that action must begin right away as part of the now, clarifying the action that each individual involved must take. It is the story of how, step-by-step, the collective get from who and where we are now, to where we want to go. Within a social movement, this can involve an individual involving the action of others, and their actions calling on others, to combine actions that mobilize change or confront the challenge. It may involve considering the development of an individual's skills, being clear on lines of responsibility and accountability

within the collective, and delegating specific commitments, to support specific outcomes (Ganz, 2011). It is about communicating honesty with commitment, not meaningless triviality.

Celebration is the final point, Ganz suggests, that strengthens a collective. By celebration, he is not necessarily referring to a party, but a way for the collective to come together to consider who they are and reflect on what they have achieved, alongside the path that they are taking into the future. He describes his philosophy behind celebrations as a way to interpret the important events that have confronted the group, recognizing the contributions made, acknowledging the commonalities of the group to deepen the sense of belonging, and in turn strengthen relationships. Storytelling is most powerful at the beginning, however the idea of celebration helps people create expectations, shape their patterns of behavior, to support further future development (Ganz, 2011: 288). He sees it as a type of ritual that allows people to join in with the vision, comparing it to a University's annual celebration of the ritual of graduation. Throughout history, rituals have cemented group identities, ensuring the continuation of the teaching of shared values ensuring responsibilities are undertaken honestly and effectively (Skocpol, Liazos and Ganz, 2006: 4).

In conclusion, Ganz (2008, 2010, 2011) strongly advocates that *Public Narrative* allows people to communicate common values, not just by exchanging and talking, but embodying them through the power of storytelling and relationships. It is through shared experiences that leaders and followers – in fact all individuals involved – can engage and initiate action through mobilization with the support of

sources of motivation for one another, the construction of shared individual and collective identities, and finally finding the collective courage to act, explore risk and make a change. Ganz appreciates throughout his writing that leadership as a process is about enabling and mobilizing others to act in the face of uncertainty. When you do not know what to do (Grint, 2005, 2010 ‘Wicked’ problems, and Heifetz, 1994 ‘Adaptive’ problems) is when the creativity of leadership is important to enable, engage and motivate others to collectively work together to achieve a common purpose. Ganz sees this working collectively in the face of uncertainty beginning with the story of self to build the relationships, developing the skill of motivating and engaging the collective via the story of us, the skill of implanting a collective strategy in the story of now, and finally the skill of putting words into action.

To demonstrate Ganz’s work in a practical situation, appendix 7 demonstrates a case study summarizing the observations of two writers who were witnesses to ‘Camp Obama’ during Barack Obama’s 2008 Presidential Campaign. To summarize this case study, the success of Obama’s campaign was significantly associated with the recruitment and training of many volunteers focusing on relationships and stories, and not just the traditional approaches to campaigning previously seen in US political elections. The intensive three-day training programme based around Ganz’s Public Narrative were practically and effectively applied as part of the grassroots training for the campaign. Although he had no official role in the Obama campaign, it was Ganz who the key Obama organizers turned to as an advisor to help design the teaching for field organizers (FOs) to organize and lead because ‘he has a style of organizing [that] really does speak to

who Barack is as a candidate' (Martelle, 2008). This case is based around the observations and personal stories of Jeffery Alexander (2010) and Zack Exley (2008) at two different Camp Obama training events. It demonstrates how the volunteer training sessions based on *Public Narrative* successfully mobilized field organizers and volunteers to arouse disengaged voters and actively contributed to Obama's victorious presidential campaign.

SUMMARY

This literature review has set the foundation for this project by reviewing the literature around leadership as a person (an individual entity/trait perspective) or as a process (a collective approach/relationships), considering RLT (Uhl-Bien, 2006) and the gap in knowledge being the 'space between people' (Uhl-Bien, 2012: ix) to include both individuals as an entity and the collective as a process for action.

Overall, leadership is a collective activity therefore there is a need to understand the connectivity of the individuals so, 'the actors must be consciously orientated to one another' (Ritzer, 2005: 265). However, traditionally relational leadership studies have viewed the subject of leadership as an entity perspective, separating and privileging leaders and followers. RLT, on the other hand has begun to address both these individual relationships as an outcome and a context for action by more comprehensively exploring the relational dynamics of leadership and organizing. Despite this, Uhl-Bien (2012: xv) suggests that to advance knowledge in the arena of leadership, an attempt to consider the 'space' suggests the requirement is for 'multi-paradigmatic approaches.... engaging scholars across disciplines and perspectives.'

To target this 'space' and consider other disciplines and perspectives, some of the opinions and concerns of this vagueness between individuals and collectives (Gamson, 1992; Melucci, 1988, 1989; Opp, 2009; Snow and Oliver, 1995) has also been discussed, considering how social movement writers have provided an alternative perspective of the processes involved in engaging in leadership. Social

movements lack authority and hierarchical structure, and yet more often than not are successful by engaging people to realize a concentrated power via a common purpose (Ganz, 2009, 2010).

By critiquing the practical and academic work of Ganz around social movements and his application of Public Narrative, the story of self, us and now, and the importance of collective identity and a 'we-feeling' (Melucci, 1988, 1989, 1995), this work attempts to take the suggestion from Uhl-Bien further to answer the research question - how can the complex, iterative processes of relationships help re-engage individual actors in a collective to tackle challenges? The remaining chapters therefore will consider this literature review, especially RLT and Ganz's Public Narrative, along with the empirical data collected for the Commission Report on Directly Elected Mayors, further organizational empirical data, case studies, mini ethnographies and secondary data,

The next chapter is the methodology, which will comprehensively outline Grounded Theory, explaining how the empirical data, case studies, ethnographies and secondary data were designed, collated and analyzed to focus on the research question proposed.

CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY

Serendipity: ser|en|dip|ity: the word was coined by Horace Walpole (1754) from the title of the fairy tale *The Three Princes of Serendip*, in which the heroes ‘were always making discoveries, by accidents and sagacity, of things they were not in quest of’.²⁷

INTRODUCTION

The initial methodology of narrative analysis used for this research collated empirical data for the University of Warwick Commission on Directly Elected Mayors. This chapter outlines the initial research design, strategy and method, then expands on how the research and project took on the Grounded Theory Method to address the various serendipitous ‘hunches’ (Glaser and Strauss, 1968; Bryant and Charmaz, 2012), or as referred to by Karl Popper (1963: 331-332) ‘stepping stones’, being observed and noted.

The initial strategy and design adopted a qualitative approach of unstructured interviews and narrative analysis to conduct research for the commission report, therefore this chapter begins by explaining why a qualitative research strategy was adopted, how the research design adapted and changed over time, taking advantage of the inductive approach, Ground Theory Method. Having observed and collated interview data from Local Government councillors and civil servants, and hearing about such low local election turnouts, it was becoming clearer there was an issue with public disengagement. However, in four specific interviews,

²⁷ Taken from the Oxford Dictionaries.

there were some meaningful stories of better engaging with the public. These stories were beginning to outline the personal experiences of four directly elected mayors' which began to change the focus of the research from Local Government Leadership to how some leaders were better at engaging and building relationships within their communities, their teams of officers and politicians. Although I was not originally looking for stories about engagement or relationships during the initial coding using narrative analysis, it became evident that there were some strong examples that could be learnt from and considered further, hence the design being adapted and further research being conducted across both public and private organizations.

RESEARCH STRATEGY

In the early twentieth century, the popularity of qualitative research methods was widespread, however by the mid-1960s sophisticated quantitative methods were emerging as the fashionable and dominant way of conducting sociological research. If an academic researcher wished to be published, quantitative methods reigned over many university departments, journal editorial boards and funding agencies, especially across the United States (Charmaz, 2006). During this strong positivist paradigm, research in sociology and leadership was about discovering causal explanations and making predictions, applying a scientific logic of objectivity to categorize human experiences into statistical quantifiable variables. There was an assumption made by positivists that it was an unbiased approach by a passive observer, collecting facts without actively participating or being involved in the creation, therefore demonstrating a separation of facts from values.

The time was one primarily of replicable research designs producing verifiable knowledge, with quantitative researchers rejecting other ways of interpreting observations. Quantitative researchers in the 1960s increasingly began to dispute and disbelieve qualitative research, stating it was impressionistic, anecdotal and biased (Bryman and Bell, 2011; Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Those who did consider aspects of qualitative methods would use them to some extent for preliminary investigation in preparation for an improved design of quantitative style questionnaires and quantifiable experiments in research (Alastalo, 2008; Snizek, 1975; Wells and Picou, 1981). During this positivist paradigm a deep chasm between theory and research became self-evident, with researchers testing

deduced hypotheses from existing theories, proving and refining what had already been discovered; there was rarely any creation of new theory.

More recently a debate has emerged from a group of writers who believe the terms ‘qualitative’ and ‘quantitative’ are mixed together within designs and paradigms, compared to the traditional methods of collecting data and analysis (Creswell, 2011). Others have discussed the discouragement of the use of the two descriptors because of the encouragement of a binary distinction that does not always hold in practice: Sandelowski, Voils and Knafl (2009), for example, stressed that quantitative counting often involved a form of qualitative judgment with the data and numbers usually being related to context, and qualitative data and analysis on occasion being used more categorically, especially when considering within-group and between group comparisons and similarities. Despite the rise of the use of mixed-methods research since the late 1980s and early 1990s (Bryman, 1988; Creswell, 2011, 2008; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007; Fielding and Fielding, 1986; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003) - or multi-methods as Morse and Niehaus (2009) refer to it - a strong case can be argued that either quantitative or qualitative methods should simply describe the actual strategy used. As Creswell (2011: 272-273) put it, to throw out the terms ‘quantitative’ and ‘qualitative’ has the potential to ‘disrupt a long-established pattern of communication that has been used in the social, behavior, and health services. Until we have replacement terms, a means of discourse across fields is helpful, but we need to be careful how we use these terms.’

RESEARCH STRATEGIES IN THE FIELD OF LEADERSHIP

The field of leadership in social science has historically been largely dominated by a single quantitative method – the self-completion questionnaire. Examples of these include the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) (Ohio State Leadership Researchers), the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (Bass, 1985), and the Transformational Leadership Inventory (TLI) (Podsakoff et al., 1990). They are widely used for their apparent validity and reliability, along with the alleged ability to show advantages and limitations of a leader's overall profile and behaviors, demonstrated as aggregated scores. Many researchers have observed this prevailing use of quantitative strategies, with Avolio et al (2009:42) observing 'quantitative strategies for studying leadership have dominated the literature over the last 100 years'. However, more recently Bryman (2011) completed content analysis research on the first five years (2006-2011) of the journal *Leadership* to discover that, despite leadership, as a field of study traditionally being associated with questionnaires, this was not ubiquitous in the *Leadership* journal. Typically, research and articles published had a tendency to be derived from 'semi-structured interviews and/or the qualitative analysis of documents' (82).

Despite the early assumptions that the positivist approach to sociology was the bedrock of research (Silverman, 1994), Mills (1959) criticized quantitative research as being abstracted empiricism, and Blumer (1969) stated how it lacked any correlation between variables by not taking the individuals that are being defined by these variables into account. Cicourel (1964) drew attention to many

social scientists choice of purely statistical logic, reflecting on how it can neglect the common-sense reasoning used by both the subject and the researcher.

Taking these criticisms further and applying them to leadership as an area of study, Alvesson and Deetz (2000) argued that the use of standardized questionnaires produce, refine and establish leadership, rather than explore it in a more open and flexible manner in the context of experience and interaction. Using this traditional positivist logic to research leaders and their leadership appears merely to confirm what researchers already know (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003a). This potentially could be part of the grounds for the wealth of criticism against leadership research: its problematic assumptions, weak theoretical development, incoherent and meager results, and the use of methods being highly remote from 'the real world' through not considering organizational context (Alvesson, 1995; Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003a; Bryman et al., 1996).

One of the leading shortcomings of quantitative research in leadership studies has been its inability to draw effective links across the many layers of leadership events and outcomes (Avolio and Bass, 1995). These many layers of leadership are dynamic and occur on many levels, covering relationships, behaviors, communication, vision, strategy, decisions, charisma, personality, and followership (Conger, 1998). Avolio and Bass (1995) referred to these as 'nests' of phenomena, covering the behavioural, the interpersonal, the organizational and the environmental. These all make the events and scenarios of leadership phenomena the successes, failures, opportunities, and crises which all affect learning and reshaping of individuals as leaders or as followers. Using a

quantitative questionnaire might aid in documenting an individual's perceptions, but overall, as a methodology used in isolation, it lacks effectiveness in considering contexts that have played a part in the individual's perceptions and experiences. Quantitative approaches predominantly focus on a single level of analysis, overlooking interactions between group, organization and context (Yukl, 1994), only providing a narrow interpretation, usually from the follower's perspective, and not measuring the leader's interaction (Lantis, 1987).

Conger's work in 1998 found other problematic factors in using a purely quantitative approach in sociological leadership studies: surveys and questionnaires only measure a static moment in time, and are unable to document events over a period of time as situations unfold or reshape, along with a problematic element of detachment of the researcher from the phenomena and events as they take place.

Leadership is symbolic and subjective, multi-faceted and complex, ever-changing and contested (Bryman, 2011; Conger, 1989, 1998; Hunt, 1991) – but quantitative methods are designed to capture a static, objective reality. This renders them far less effective in the subjective 'reality' of leadership and therefore an ability to be more interpretative and flexible in how leadership is defined and experienced is required in this contested area of study. For these reasons a qualitative strategic approach was chosen for this study.

RESEARCH DESIGN

To achieve this flexible approach - both for the initial empirical research for the Warwick Commission and the continued empirical research addressing the research question proposed - previous leadership studies clearly demonstrated the need for a research strategy that was qualitative, therefore adopting a theoretically inductive and epistemologically interpretive approach. Taking this inductive-iterative approach allowed the research design to focus on the observations and findings from the informants' interviews to help consider the theory and phenomenology of leadership, to explore the leaders' and followers' social constructions of their social worlds, and how they construct meanings through personal interactions. Working with an inductive strategy ensures that leadership as a concept can be better analysed through understanding the meanings of the concept first hand from those actually involved in leadership as a social action (Grint, 2000).

The initial design was specifically constructed to allow comparative evaluation of the role of a mayor not just internationally, but also in relation to the traditional council leader model. It was agreed by the Director of the Commission and myself as principal researcher, that extensive interviews were to be conducted including eleven mayors and six council leaders in England, seven mayors from across Australia, Canada and New Zealand, and four mayors from the USA (the latter interviews were conducted by a graduate student from the Department of Political Science, Boston University). Alongside the twenty-nine agreed principle interviews, thirty-two interviews (some formal, some informal) were also conducted with civil servants from various councils, and members of the public.

Debates and campaign meetings were also attended as an observer to better understand the various conflicting opinions and arguments for and against the mayoral model.

Whilst designing the approach to the research, it was obvious that conducting interviews from as far afield as Canada, New Zealand and Australia is both time-consuming and expensive. Specific dates were identified, contact names were researched online or by telephone (Healey and Rawlinson, 1993), before formal letters including a short outline of the Warwick Commission and its purpose were emailed to thirteen²⁸ mayors across Canada, Australia and New Zealand, along with five²⁹ in the USA. Of the thirteen, seven were available during this time period and agreed to meet with me. Of the six who were not available for interview, Mayor Gregor Roberston of Vancouver apologized for being embroiled in campaigning and the mayoral election (as a result of which he won a second term as Mayor of Vancouver). Others responded apologizing that they were not available during the dates offered. However, with regards to the US mayors, not one responded.

When consulting with an academic from Oxford University who used to work in the offices of a US Mayor, she agreed to read the standard letter (see appendices 1 and 4) that had been sent out to all mayors. Her immediate opinion on why none of them had responded was due to the tone and content of the letter not addressing them appropriately; in her experience the letter should have been compiled as if it

²⁸ Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Hamilton, Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Toronto, Halifax, Ottawa

²⁹ New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Minneapolis, Boston

was contacting a member of royalty. In the US, city mayors are apparently seen as powerful, busy people who are not necessarily that approachable and treated as if they are the republic's equivalent of city 'royalty'. Not dissimilar to the US President, the British Prime Minister, or the Queen, US City Mayors are surrounded and protected by advisors and gatekeepers. Despite the research suggesting the role of the US mayor being more accountable, with quicker decision-making and having the obvious public mandate (Elcock and Fenwick, 2007; Game, 2003; Rao, 2003), in the experience of this research approachability does not seem to be one of their strengths.

In England, the names of the twelve mayors already elected (including the London Mayor, Boris Johnson) were identified and their offices contacted with another similar formal letter (see appendix 2) and a research outline (appendix 4). They were emailed requesting a convenient date and time for interview. Along with the mayors, the council leaders of the eleven cities listed in the Localism Bill were also contacted (appendix 3 and 4). There was more flexibility given in terms of dates and time frame, as there was no extensive travel necessary.

Eleven mayors' offices got in contact to arrange interviews. One mayor requested a list of questions to answer via email due to being too busy to arrange a face-to-face interview (Linda Arkley, North Tyneside), and Boris Johnson's diary commitments were proving too restrictive so he kindly arranged for his Head of Governance, Tom Middleton, to be interviewed in his place. The only English mayor's office that did not respond to the letter was Ray Mallon the Mayor of Middlesbrough. There were many reasons given by people who knew him, but he

eventually gave an interview after a ‘yes’ campaign debate held in Coventry nearer the date of the referendum.

On finally meeting with Ray Mallon, he admitted he did not give interviews after being quoted out of context during his first term as Mayor of Middlesbrough by a local journalist. He admitted to feeling apprehensive about talking to people about certain issues, hence why he had not responded to my original letter. He finally agreed to talk to me after meeting and chatting informally with me at the Coventry debate. The reason he gave for finally agreeing to talk to me was he felt that, as an academic researcher, he could trust me, and I presented myself professionally and openly.

Of the eleven council leaders and two ex-council leaders, only six formally responded and were happy to be interviewed. Others were either too busy, formally declined, or did not respond to the letter.

A number of informal interviews were also conducted. These were possible due to opportunities arising at debates and conferences, or by asking people for comment at unrelated events (for example, a military reception at the City Hall in Liverpool).

The qualitative approach to the research and the design was intended to give mayors, council leaders and other interviewees a greater opportunity to express their views and experiences around the complex area of local government leadership and governance. Although using a quantitative style questionnaire may

have enabled a larger international audience, it was realized by the commission that prescribed questions via email had the potential of being too static and impersonal, not giving subjects the opportunity to be open in describing their personal interpretations face-to-face. However, to supplement the interviews that were conducted, there was some quantitative data accessed and considered for the commission report from a series of published reports and articles that had already been undertaken by previous authors (Gains et al., 2006; Parker, 2012; Randle, 2004; Stoker, 2004).

Due to the intricacy of people's different experiences and backgrounds in local government leadership, especially because of the international approach of the research, as the principle interviewer I assumed an unstructured approach. This was to ensure a far greater interest in the subject's point of view and allow an element of 'rambling' to get a greater insight as to what the individual saw as important to the role of an elected mayor (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Unlike a more structured, quantitative approach, by allowing the interviewee to 'tell their story' it facilitated a greater flexibility encouraging each interview to adjust and address significant issues relevant to person, place and politics. The flexibility of using storytelling, also allowed for the conversation to continue after the interview had 'officially' finished. In some cases, this is when something quite profound was said because the pen and paper had been put away, and the subject was more relaxed.

Because of the nature of the research question for the commission, and the increasing number of supplementary questions being proposed by the

commissioners, it was recognized an aide memoir would be helpful for myself as the interviewer to ensure the range of the commission's interests and topics were being considered in the interviewee's answers. By letting subjects tell their story, the interview was similar to a conversation (Burgess, 1984). In some cases, interviewees were happy for the interview to be recorded, but the majority – probably because of the potentially sensitive nature of their role – preferred it to be more informal and relaxed with myself taking extensive notes. This did not prove too much of a problem because I am able to write quickly, although it did mean a lack of eye contact at times with the interviewee.

Directly after the interview, time was taken to reflect on the notes taken and rewrite any sections whilst the interview was still fresh in my mind, along with any other thoughts in the form of memos. In more than a few circumstances, clarification questions were sent to the interviewees by email to ensure accuracy. When using quotes throughout the commission report, as well as quotes throughout this writing, prior approval was sought to again ensure accuracy and interpretation of the messages that the subject was conveying.

After each interview, in addition to asking for any clarifications, each interviewee was emailed with a personal thank you for their time and contribution. This was an important element for several reasons: The position of leadership that these individuals hold in local government means they are very busy, so appreciation of their time was seen as common courtesy; to ensure trust and honesty, this communication was important for any future contact, meetings, questions or follow-up interviews; and, it also enabled some of the people interviewed to thank

me as the interviewer for allowing them time to reflect on their position and role, expressing how cathartic the experience was in terms of being allowed to talk about themselves.

It was at this point that the research design took a slightly different direction (see the Research Timeline - figure 3.1, page 123). To expand on the sixty-one interviews already conducted, and support my initial findings – ‘hunches’ - around this concept of engagement and relationships and how they can be better understood, further research was necessary. By taking four of the original interviews³⁰ that most clearly showed examples of how leaders had - or had not - better engaged and mobilized their local communities, the change in research design involved observing and listening to facilitated discussions and/or organizational problems in thirty-three leadership development workshops. These numerous opportunities included development workshops with groups of NHS personnel (England and Scotland), Civil Servants from across government offices, Police leaders (Sergeant to Chief Constable), middle managers from across various social and children’s services, as well as middle to senior leaders from a few private organizations (Emirates, KLM and Aircraft Solutions Ltd to name a few). In total, thirty-three full day sessions (between 12-180 attendees) were attended, with participants in the room being asked what ‘was the biggest work problem they were currently encountering’. These were followed up with fourteen one-on-one interviews with public and private sector workers from across the Civil Service, NHS, Scottish NHS, England and Wales Police, Social and Children’s Services, local councils, Emirates, KLM and BMW. The

³⁰ Naheed Nenshi (Mayor of Calgary), Sir Peter Soulsby (City Mayor of Leicester), Peter Kelly (Mayor of Halifax) and Julie Hardaker (Mayor of Hamilton).

interviews included a Chief Constable, a Chief Executive of an NHS Trust, three civil servants at The Hague, and an Executive from a blue-chip organization. Further case studies were also considered to support my ‘hunch’ around better engaging individuals and building better relationships. A short ethnography was conducted to expand on my personal experiences of observing and spending time with the Royal Air Force Aerobatic Display Team, the Red Arrows, with an opportunity of interviewing past and present leaders and members of the team.

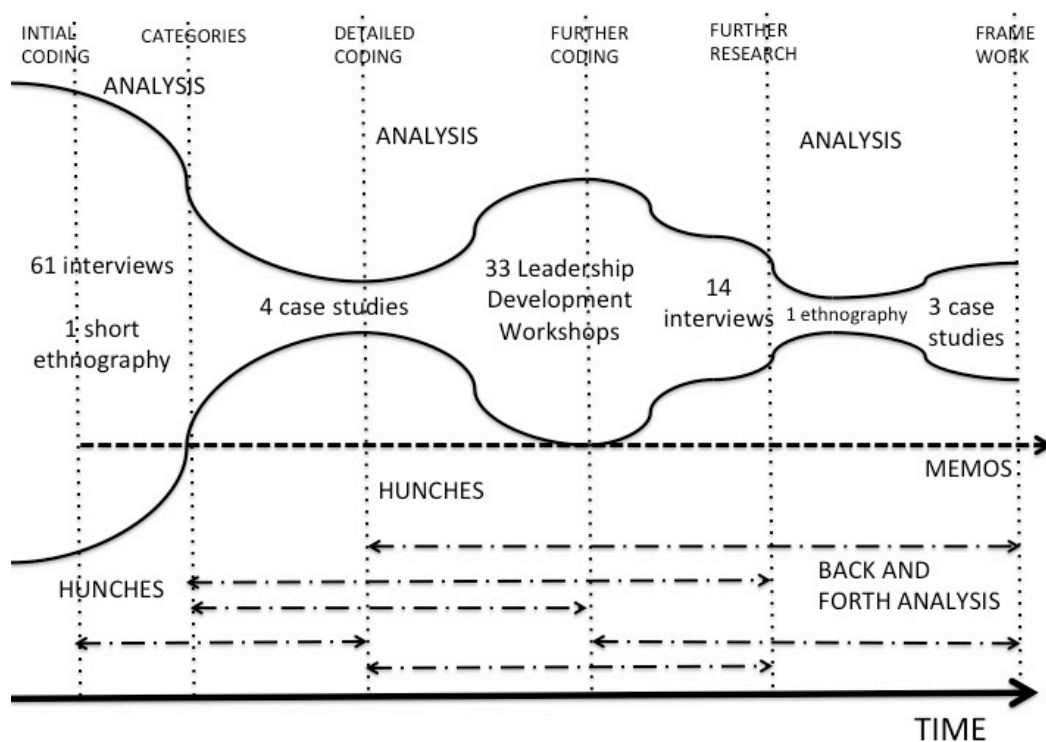


Figure 3.1 – Research Timeline

In total seventy-five interviews were conducted (sixty-one for the commission report, fourteen from across the public and private sector), thirty-three leadership development workshop observations, two short ethnographies (Leicester City Council and the Red Arrows), and numerous relevant debates and conferences.

Group	Contacted	Interviewed/ Attended
Elected Mayors		
England	12	12
Australia, NZ, Canada	13	7
USA	5	0
Council Leaders		
England	11	6
Civil Servants		
England	-	8
Canada	-	4
Politicians		
Councillors	-	6
MP	-	1
Public (informal)		
England	-	7
Canada	-	6
TOTAL	-	57 ³¹
Mayoral Campaign Meetings	-	3
Mayoral Debates	-	4
Facilitated Development Workshops	-	33 (total of 974 participants)
Ethnographies		
Leicester and RAF Red Arrows	-	2

Table 3.1 – Research Summary

³¹ The total number of interviews came to 61 due to four extra interviews conducted by the graduate student from Boston University.

METHODOLOGY FOR THE COMMISSION REPORT

In the early stages of the project when the research was specifically for the commission report, the initial methodology adopted was narrative analysis. It was put into practice almost immediately, after the first few interviews had been conducted, and identification of possible coding was considered. Due to the nature of asking people to tell their story about being a local government leader, narrative analysis was considered an approach deemed sensitive to the constructed sequences of an individual's events and experiences (Bell and Bryman, 2011). Mishler (1986) argues that interview accounts are actually stories and that narrative analysis does not just relate to a life span or story, but it can also relate to specific episodes and the interconnections between them. By deliberately asking people to tell their personal story (Miller, 2000) and applying narrative analysis to each interview account (Reissman, 1993, 2008) it allowed the research to help with the 'sense-making' (Weick, 1995) of the elected mayoral role. As identified by Rhodes and Brown (2005), in addition to this sense-making power of narrative analysis, it also covers four other research areas: communication, learning and change, politics and power, and identity and structuration. These areas are a reflection of the coding that was initially identified when analyzing the interview notes and transcripts. Rather than using electronic software to code the interview data (for example NVivo), coding was done manually using various colors throughout the notes to highlight the following areas:

1. Identity and vision (person or place) - Blue
2. Communication and engagement – Red
3. Accountability and influence - Pink
4. Leadership styles (charisma and approach) - Purple
5. Partnerships and relationships - Green
6. Powers (soft or hard [Nye, 2008]) - Yellow
7. Politics (party or independent) – Grey

Table 3.2 – Initial Coding

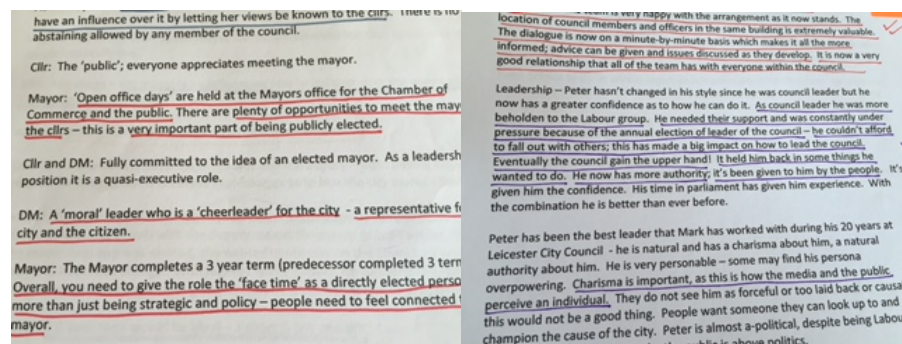


Figure 3.2 – Samples of initial-coded transcripts

Despite being labour-intensive and time consuming, analyzing the data manually encouraged myself as the researcher to better interpret the richness of the stories told by the subjects. This also helped identify other important experiences and opinions that other mayors or local leaders may not have talked about or considered during the interview process. Most of the stories told by the subjects had obvious commonalities, with some interviewees reflecting on situations and experiences quite differently. This was particularly apparent when interviewing mayors in England who had previously been a council leader, but were now fulfilling the role as a directly elected leader. Reading the transcripts, notes and memos side-by-side, and in context with the conversation that was actually had,

helped build a clearer picture of subjective opinion than if using one of the many computer programmes. Computer programmes are flexible and easy to use, but in my experience of initial coding and analysis of data, the use of CAQDAS inhibited me from being part of the process of interpretation and had the potential to dehumanize the research process, in turn reducing the personal aspects of data analysis (Morison and Moir, 1998).

Taking into account a personal preference for conducting research and analysis manually, for this project all coding and analysis was conducted manually, color coding the transcripts (see table 3.2 and figure 3.2); initially with codes, then developing into categories. Despite the obvious downfalls of piles of paper and transcripts, and the necessity of having to be organized and disciplined, manually coding and sorting the data all became a huge advantage in terms of how close to the data I became as the researcher. By *close*, I mean that the iterative nature of actually manually reading the transcripts over and over, side by side, comparatively and constructively, all enabled any interpretations to be considered directly alongside memos and observations, therefore allowing for thorough interpretation, without any constraint. The use of software has the potential to distance a researcher from their data, therefore putting the procedure and intelligence of a computer package ahead of interpretation and the reality that ‘knowledge is everywhere... and that we should feel unconstrained to its collection, use and analysis’ (Thomas and James, 2006: 791). In her own research using grounded theory, Bong (2002: 2) was very aware that whatever method she used to analyze her data – CAQDAS or a ‘manual-cum-word’ approach – it should only ever essentially be used as a tool to assist in the analysis of qualitative

data, and not constitute the analysis itself. She writes about how it is ‘ludicrous’ to assert that CAQDAS threatens the ‘dehumanization, mechanization, quantification and sterilization’ of qualitative research (Pfaffenberger quoted in Weaver and Atkinson 1994:9), and she suggests that researchers are ‘damned if they do [use CAQDAS] and damned if they don’t’ (Bong, 2002: 8). Coding, whether manually or using CAQDAS, is not the only way to analyze qualitative data, and it is certainly not the preferred method for some authors (Lee and Fielding, 1996), however, it is a tool that helps rather than hinders the organizing and interpreting of piles of data.

Regarding the analysis of observations, these were all noted as memos in notebooks, all dated and subsequently coded using the same codes for the earlier interviews. Building on this, due to expense, it was not possible to revisit and spend time with Naheed Nenshi in Calgary or Julie Hardaker in Hamilton. Therefore, to build on the interviews and construct case studies, the use of social media provided additional support to the stories obtained face-to-face. Both individuals were followed on Twitter and Facebook, and videos on YouTube were watched to gain further insights.

After analyzing the four case studies drawn from the commission research, and continuing with the original coding, the identified problems of engagement and relationships were prominent and supported by three of the case studies with regards to how to improve these identified problems. However, further work was required to build on these to provide further empirical data from other organizations.

As highlighted in the section outlining the research design, in total seventy-five interviews were conducted (sixty-one for the commission report, fourteen from across the public and private sector), thirty-three leadership development workshop observations, two short ethnographies (Leicester City Council and the Red Arrows), and numerous relevant debates and conferences (see table 3.1).

During and after the research process, I found myself subjectively and interactively constructing the subject's stories and experiences to reconstruct particular phenomenon associated with the amended research question for this work. By constantly revisiting these stories and personal constructions, an image of the perceived reality of the interviewees was built and the approach for the project began taking the form of Grounded Theory. It became self-evident by studying the grounded theory literature and then attending a full day workshop at Reading University, organized and delivered by Professor Dan Remenyi and Professor Tony Bryant, that I was searching for social processes present in human interaction (Hutchinson, 1993). What I had actually been discovering were patterns, processes and an understanding of how a group of people define, via their social interactions, their social reality (Stern et al, 1982). It was through changing my approach and deciding to use this particular methodology, first proposed by Barney Glaser and Anslem Strauss in 1967, and throughout the coding and constant back and forth nature of the analysis of the interview data, that the concept for the rest of this writing was identified to address the new research question away from the Commission: how can the complex, iterative processes of relationships help re-engage individual actors in a collective to tackle challenges?

To explain this more clearly, it is now necessary to conduct an overview of the eventual adopted methodology, due to its misunderstood and misused negative reputation (Bryant, 2012) - Grounded Theory, its history and various approaches, along with the chosen approach for this project.

GROUNDING THEORY – IT IS NOT A THEORY, BUT A METHOD

The Grounded Theory Method (GTM) was used to build on the initial coding conducted for the commission report, due to the many strengths Grounded Theory has in allowing the research to be inductive and comparative, constructionist and interactive; it allows an iterative process of looking back and forth over the data to permit a progressively more focused analysis of any possible emerging theory or theories. Focusing on the background to the GTM in qualitative research, along with a critique into the various approaches, the following section will demonstrate why its advantages as a methodology were appropriate for this research. Despite Grounded Theory being one of the most widely used and popular methods (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007), it is often a misused and misinterpreted method in qualitative research, with many researchers, in the experience of Bryant (2012)³², only having a vague idea of what it is, and quite often giving a commonly inaccurate idea of its use. It is this misuse that has been the cause of conflicting opinions and unresolved issues regarding the nature and process of Grounded Theory (Cutcliffe, 2000), with the approach being ‘vulnerable to uncritical acceptance and imprecise application’ (Anells, 1996: 391).

The popularity of Grounded Theory was always likely to produce controversy, as predicted by one of the original founders, Anselm Strauss: the method was at risk of ‘becoming fashionable’ (Strauss and Corbin, 1994: 277). Denzin also recognized Grounded Theory had become ‘the most widely used qualitative interpretive framework in the social sciences’ (1994: 508), with Miller and Fredericks (1999) highlighting that it had become the ‘paradigm of choice’ for

³² Talking at a Grounded Theory workshop in October 2012 at Reading University.

qualitative research in education and social sciences. Others have suggested that its popularity was due to it meeting a need, arguing that what it ultimately produces is less like discovery, but more an invention (Thomas and James, 2006: 768). Thomas and James (2006) talk about the popularity of Grounded Theory meeting the needs of qualitative research due to the tricky nature of undertaking this approach in social sciences, especially with regards to the nature of the methods used, involving talking as naturally as possible with subjects, alongside observation. This, in turn, produces a huge amount of data, piles of transcripts, pages of memos, resulting in a feeling by the researcher of becoming lost in a forest with no map or compass. In the experiences of Thomas and James (2006), social scientists use Grounded Theory because of its accessibility in offering a set of procedures to help generate theory. However, there are writers who question its popularity and claims, especially with regards to it being a method to produce better predictive and explanatory outcomes than other methods. These criticisms will be discussed and analyzed later, but Onions (2006) puts much of it down to the polarization and defensive rhetoric of its founders after they split in 1992, with Grounded Theory breaking up into three versions: the original version presented by Glaser and Strauss in their writing in 1967; the 'Glaserian' approach; and the 'Straussian' approach (terms coined by Stern, 1994). Therefore it is recommended by most users of Grounded Theory to choose a version relevant and pertinent to the research in question and the researcher's approach to the topic (Cutcliffe, 2000; Fernandez, 2004; Onions, 2006; Smit and Bryant, 2000).

Because of these various approaches, and more recent attempts to develop Grounded Theory (Bryant, 2003; Charmaz, 2003, 2006; Fernandez, 2004), it is

important to be clear on its use and its theoretical origins in symbolic interactionism, as well as its positivist influences. To understand it philosophically there is a need to be aware of its other ontological, epistemological, and methodological perspectives (Annells, 1996), from its inception in the 1960's to considering its present day paradigms. One particular adaptation to the approach, extensively written about by Kathy Charmaz (2012) in her book *Constructing Grounded Theory: A practical guide through qualitative research*, has the potential to be especially viable for researching leadership in social studies.

Before outlining grounded theory in more detail, it is important to consider and understand 'what is theory', due to the nature of grounded theory being about theory generation (Remenyi, 2013: 59).

WHAT IS THEORY?

The word ‘theory’ is associated with many different meanings, most commonly providing an explanation of observed regularities (Bryman and Bell, 2011). As human beings we develop ways of dealing with problems in the world, in a sense continually developing theories (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000). However, although academia is framed around rooting knowledge in theoretical frameworks (Remenyi, 2013), there are still conflicting notions about what ‘theory’ means (Charmaz, 2012). Day-to-day, individuals may discuss having ‘a theory’ as taking the form of speculation or belief, or even a guess. But to apply theory to knowledge takes the form of an explanation of a series of inter-related concepts to aid comprehension and provide a component to a body of knowledge (Remenyi, 2013). To better understand social activities, we best understand theory as a way of being in the world, with theories being developed and accepted based on their ability to be useful in conceptualizing, thinking and talking about these social phenomena (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000: 39).

Predominantly, definitions around the concept of ‘theory’ arise from positivist views based around the objectives of ‘explanation’ and ‘prediction’, with an emphasis on generality and universality (Charmaz, 2012). Theories of this nature are deductive, starting with a theory, testing a hypothesis through data and findings, then confirming or rejecting the hypotheses (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2008). Despite appearing very linear and logical in sequence, elegant and direct in the statements proposed, such theories often produce narrow and simplistic explanations of action (Charmaz, 2012; Thomas and James, 2006). Thomas and James (2006: 772), with the influence of work by Miller and Fredericks (1999),

prefer to suggest that theory is about inspiration, involving patterning or accommodation, explanation and prediction: the latter part being far tighter in its form relating to a far more positivist explanation, with the former seen as loose, essentially bringing ideas together (an interpretive approach).

Taking this looser, interpretive perspective - as the qualitative nature of this research does - theory can emphasize understanding rather than explanation. To take Ritzer and Goodman's (2004) discussion on sociological theory, it has a far-ranging scope, offering wide applications, dealing with fundamental issues across social life. This view demonstrates the strong interpretive components of emphasizing an imaginative understanding on a particular phenomenon being studied. George Herbert Mead's theoretical perspective, symbolic interactionism (discussed in more detail when outlining the history and influencing foundations of grounded theory), shares these assumptions due to Mead's view of 'action as the starting place for analysis that includes the person's imagined understanding of the other person's role and response during interaction' (quoted in Charmaz, 2012: 127). Adopting the epistemological approach of social constructionism for this research 'what' people assume as real and 'how' they construct this view of reality are therefore located within the observed and recorded particular perspectives and experiences.

There are limits within theoretical understandings, with it not being necessary for a theory to be a complete explanation, and many only being partial explanations of particular phenomenon (Remenyi, 2013). Philosopher of science Feyerabend (1975 [1993]: 39) made this point saying, 'We may start by pointing out that no

single theory ever agrees with all the known facts in its domain.’ However, as Popper stresses, if the aim of scientists is to discover the truth around a problem, theories must therefore be serious attempts to find truth, and if not truth, they may be ‘important stepping stones’ towards truth and help with further discoveries (1963: 331-332). Theories are about explaining in one sense, and understanding in another, but they are often irrelevant and can misdirect observations (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000). Indeed, some major theories which have shaped and defined social science problems have very little data to support them (Astley, 1985; Gergen, 1982). Some have argued that theories are heavily value-laden (Hamnett et al., 1984), while others have suggested some theories are accepted because of their context, such as career needs, and social and economic conditions (Wagner and Gooding, 1987).

To summarize and attempt to answer the question ‘what is theory’, Mouzelis (1995) defines theory as falling into two kinds: theory as tools for thinking; and, theory as a set of statements saying something new about the social world which can be proved or disproved by empirical investigation. Despite the variety of definitions and opinions across disciplines and within social science, it is evident that what theories are able to offer are ‘stepping stones’ – as suggested by Popper - to offer conceptions of life, along with challenging existing assumptions and they essentially contribute to knowledge.

Where does Grounded Theory fit within these conflicting opinions of ‘theory’? Perhaps the first point to note is that Grounded Theory is more about conjecture and therefore creativity (Thomas and James, 2006), or, as identified by Cicourel

(1979), it is a 'weak theory' associated with inductive assumptions in field research. Charmaz (1995: 28) acknowledges in her earlier writing around Grounded Theory, that it represents more 'middle range theories to explain behaviour and processes.' This is seen as an issue with Thomas and James (2006) who argue 'weak' or 'middle range' theories help to understand but not explain and it might be more useful to consider Grounded Theory less as a 'theory' in a conventional sense and more as a method.

THE THEORETICAL ORIGINS OF GROUNDED THEORY

The foundations of grounded theory consist of a collaboration of two sociologists (with an input of a medical professional, Jean Quint), marrying together two contrasting, yet mutually competing, traditions of sociology, with their real life experiences: Barney Glaser's background around positivism from Columbia University and Anselm Strauss' experiences of pragmatism and symbolic interactionism from the Chicago School. By considering their differing backgrounds independently, it can be demonstrated why grounded theory was seen at the time of its inception as groundbreaking, and why in present times it is still deemed by many as a method for social science researchers to conduct studies rigorously.

Barney Glaser conducted his arduous training in quantitative methods within the positivist school of thought (Charmaz, 2012:7). He conducted his Postdoctoral research under the supervision of Robert Merton, the theorist and sociologist, who frequently collaborated with Paul Lazarsfeld the methodologist. The working relationship between Lazarsfeld and Merton was seen as a rich and influential collaboration in the field of communication studies and mass media, with their work being considered as one of the first 'focused group interviews' or more commonly known today as focus groups (Rogers, 1994). The paper for which Lazarsfeld and Merton are best known is their 'Mass Communication, Popular Taste, and Organized Social Action' (1948).

Glaser's positivist quantitative background was strongly influenced by Lazarsfeld's epistemological assumptions and these are strongly mirrored in the

logic and systematic approaches of grounded theory method. It was Lazarsfeld who contributed greatly to sociological methods of study, earning him the title of the ‘founder of modern empirical sociology’, due to much of his research being survey based (Jeábek, 2001).

Glaser used his experiences of working closely with Merton and Lazarsfeld to attempt to codify qualitative research methods, as Lazarsfeld had codified quantitative research. His influences on grounded theory are clearly visible today with regards to rigorous coding and the emphasis on emerging theories (Charmaz, 2012).

In Chicago, away from the mathematical studies being conducted at Columbia University, Anselm Strauss was studying at the Chicago School, covering a diverse array of methodological and theoretical approaches to sociology. The philosophy of pragmatism, symbolic interactionism and ethnographic traditions heavily influenced Strauss’ studies; he viewed human beings as active agents in their own lives and worlds and made assumptions based on his influences that process, not structure, was fundamental and obvious in the observation of people as individuals created structure through engaging in process (Charmaz, 2012: 7). Strauss also believed that subjective and social meanings were reliant on an individual’s use of language and their emergent action.

Strauss’ work reflects the pragmatist philosophical tradition (Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1932), which informed the theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism. Much of Strauss’ influence was from the work by Herbert

Blumer, himself a student of George H. Mead in the 1920s. Blumer's work was dominated by the effect of his experiences of working with Mead and Robert Park in the areas of urban sociology and the use of ethnographic methods, arguing that humans come to understand collective social definitions through a socializing process (Annells, 1996). Blumer realized that for social science to develop in its own right and free itself from the positivist school with its strong links to classical physics at the time, concepts in social science should be termed and treated as 'sensitizing concepts' as opposed to the natural science of 'definite concepts' (Blumer, 1954). He openly criticized statistical methods throughout his career, and in the 1950s he targeted his attack on statistics by focusing on survey research - the main proponent of which was Glaser's main influencer, Lazarsfeld (Alastalo, 2008: 33). Blumer believed the process of interpretation to be at the center of human actions, and therefore saw more quantitative approaches to research in social sciences as being incapable of catching this understanding. Out of this realization, Blumer challenged positivism by conducting his own empirical studies around social interactions, leading him to found symbolic interactionism.

Symbolic interactionism is a theoretical perspective that is derived from the American philosophical tradition of pragmatism. It is a theory that assumes that people construct selves, society and reality through their interactions, and so therefore rely on language and communication: human interaction is fluid, dynamic and interpretive, depending on how people create, enact and change meanings and actions (Charmaz, 2012: 189). Denzin (1992) wrote about symbolic interactionism as being interested in the interactions between people, considering individual conversations alongside other social interactions.

Tourigny (1994) described it as an approach used to inquire about human conduct and group behavior, with a history spanning several disciplines, while Morse and Field (1995) viewed individuals as active participants in creating meaning in situations.

During the twentieth century symbolic interactionism became influential in social sciences, especially as it shares many of the underpinnings of the now more popular social constructionism. It has influenced many writers as well as Strauss, including Weick's (1995) work on organizational sense-making, and Hothschild's (1983) work on human feelings and emotion, but it has its critics. Gabriel (2008: 294) highlights the three main criticisms, with the first being that the theory tends to underestimate the importance of social structures in the guiding and influencing of symbolic interactions, a point supported by Lewis (1992) who argued that symbolic interactionism ignored moral structures and class, therefore producing possible distortions of social phenomena. The second criticism discussed by Gabriel is that the theory has a naïve view of people because it underestimates the negative emotions of human beings with regards to violent urges, arguments, irrationality and destruction. Finally, it is argued that symbolic interactionism does not always consider the power dynamics within a society or organization: that is, it tends to assume that people are free to create their own interpretations without the influences of cultural or political circumstances. Despite these criticisms, Gabriel does believe that as long as the theory is applied in sophisticated ways it can prove to be helpful in interpreting ongoing processes from the understandings and meanings of the actors involved.

Strauss put the pragmatist philosophical tradition at the heart of grounded theory and its ontological foundations can be traced back to the late 1800s and were influenced by the work of Charles Peirce and the pragmatists. They believed that knowledge was a coping strategy to achieve human ends and therefore if something constructed by a human being worked for them at a particular time, then in some sense it was right; or to put it in their terms, if something worked, then it was true (Remenyi, 2013). Pragmatism assumes that people are active and creative, and view reality as characterized by indeterminacy and fluidity, and so open to multiple interpretations. Or, as Glaser suggested, ‘for what is, not what might be’ (1992: 67). This philosophy argues that meanings emerge through practical actions to solve problems, and through these actions people come to know the world in which they live (Charmaz, 2012: 188).

Many of the underpinnings of this ontological pragmatist approach were picked up by Strauss and applied to grounded theory, but he rarely refers to it in his writings. And yet it is key to understanding aspects of the method and to the practical value of academic research in everyday working experience, with the researcher producing a theory that has both ‘fit’ and ‘grab’ (Remenyi, 2013). The use of this language – fit and grab – are part of the criteria for grounded theory; with ‘fit’ meaning that it will be obvious to all concerned that the developed theory can be seen to have evolved from the data collated and analyzed, and ‘grab’ used to demonstrate how the audience and contributors to the research accept theory with regards to its practicality and usefulness (Charmaz, 2012; Covan, 2007; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Remenyi, 2013). Despite pragmatism being one of the foundations for grounded theory, the philosophy is not

uncontroversial, especially its notion of ‘truth’, and its popularity declined over the late twentieth century. In more recent times, it has re-emerged as neo-pragmatism through work by Richard Rorty (Remenyi, 2013).

These specific backgrounds and trajectories brought Glaser and Strauss together at the University of California, San Francisco. The influences of Glaser’s positivistic background and Strauss’ pragmatic symbolic interactionism, combined with their shared keen interest in studying both social and psychological processes within a particular social setting considering specific experiences of individuals, was to provide the basic turning point for qualitative research at the time. Early writings by Glaser and Strauss (1967) acknowledged grounded theory as a postpositivist method because of the research being independent of the researcher and the real world; in other words separate existences. Therefore earlier grounded theory work can be identified as having a modified objectivist epistemological view (Annells, 1996), especially until the 1990s (Osborne, 1994). Since the 1990s, continued work within grounded theory conducted by Glaser (1992, 2002), Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998), Charmaz (1987, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2012), and Bryant (2002, 2003), has demonstrated a divergent move towards being epistemologically subjectivist and transactional in that the researcher is regarded as actively involved in the method and not separated from it (Strauss, 1987). Due to these changes in grounded theory epistemology over time, Charmaz (1987) warns there is a potential for researchers to misuse grounded theory if they gloss over the different epistemological assumptions of the approach, suggesting it is important to fully appreciate the extant sociological theory from which grounded theory arose;

hence a rather more in-depth analysis of the method in this chapter than would usually be expected.

The beginning of grounded theory was established by Glaser and Strauss (1965) whilst researching and writing about data that involved an individual's specific ideas and actual experiences, which involved listening carefully to what people were saying and intently observing what they did. Their intention for the role of the researcher was to then build on this interpretative information to describe and explore the phenomena around the subject as an individual, and as a subject in social science. In these early days, they were initially building on their own personal experiences and participation within a particular social phenomena, which gave them a 'hunch' regarding the expectations of death by both the dying and their relatives. These expectations were fundamental in their research to understand the interactions between groups of people.

They authored a book, *Awareness of Dying*, and it was the type of method they were using to develop theory that became of interest to researchers at the time. By exploring their analytical ideas during the long conversations they were involved in with subjects and through exchanging their extensive preliminary notes referring to their field observations, they had developed systematic methodological strategies in social science that had the potential to be adopted and used by other social scientists for studying many other different areas. Glaser and Strauss went on to publish a book in 1967 titled *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* and it was here that they first documented and clearly articulated these methodological strategies and proposed the developing of theories grounded in

data; it was the opposite to the dominant sophisticated quantitative methods being used extensively at the time to deduce testable hypotheses from an existing theory or theories.

Their studies now proposed a more systematic strategic approach, which would yield far more logical qualitative research to generate theory of social processes. Glaser and Strauss proposed the seven basic foundations for grounded theory in practice (Charmaz, 2012; Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987). They include the data collection and data analysis conducted simultaneously; coding and categorization are constructed directly from the data, and not from deduced hypotheses; the method constantly compares and involves each stage of analysis; the process allows theory to develop during each step of data collection and analysis; the researcher constantly writes memos to help elaborate, specify and define relationships, and help identify gaps as the research progresses; sampling of the research data is aimed towards constructing theory, not for population representativeness; and, the conducting of a literature review is done after the development of any independent analysis.

The controversial final point referring to conducting a literature review after the analysis of data was due to grounded theory being about the development of new theoretical approaches. Glaser and Strauss argued that by conducting a literature review afterwards, they could potentially avoid seeing the research area through other writers' multiple lenses, ideas and interpretations. However, Hutchison (1993) suggests the opposite when using grounded theory, recommending it should be traditionally conducted prior to data collection because it allows the

researcher to identify any potential gaps in knowledge in the area to provide a rationale for the research. Cutcliffe (2000), on the other hand, meets this debate on middle ground by arguing that it depends on the researcher's stand point: 'What do we already know' or 'we recognize there is an absence of knowledge'. He continues to believe 'No potential researcher is an empty vessel, a person with no history or background' (2000: 1480). Smith and Biley's thoughts support Cutcliffe, by acknowledging that a detailed literature review was not necessarily the first step in grounded theory, but they do support the notion that some reading may be necessary prior to collection: 'General reading of the literature may be carried out to obtain a feel for the issues at work in the subject area, and identify any gaps to be filled in using grounded theory' (1997: 20).

With regards to this actual piece of social research, and the context within which it was conducted, the advice of Smith and Biley, and Cutcliffe was considered to ensure the context of any literature was considered and reviewed hand-in-hand with the data collection and analysis. As the trajectory of the research began to change after the commission report was launched, this aspect of grounded theory continued to be adapted to suit the new angle discovered during data analysis.

The book *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* in 1967 appeared to provide qualitative researchers with a strong argument to bolster the methodology as a credible and recognized approach to the study of social sciences. What their approach was beginning to demonstrate was that the traditional skepticisms and assumptions of qualitative research could now be effectively challenged. Grounded theory suggested that qualitative methods were not purely

impressionistic and unsystematic, it was not necessary to separate data collection and the analysis phases of research, qualitative research was not just a precursor to quantitative methods, and the method weakened the assumptions made by many writers of the time that qualitative research could not generate theory.

During the 1960s and early 1970s, there were very few methods or articles written providing advice to help researchers tackle mounds of data being collected in an appropriate manner. What Glaser and Strauss managed to successfully do during this shift in paradigm, was provide a set of clear, analytic guidelines for any individual wanting to conduct a piece of research using a qualitative methodology.

The foundations, history and advancements of grounded theory as a method are important to discuss for any researcher using it, with many writers in the area agreeing that researcher precision in describing the use of the method of grounded theory is vital (Bryant, 2012³³; Cutcliffe, 2000). Others believe this is necessary due to the similarities between the various interpretive methods with differing underlying principles (Stern, 1994). So far in this chapter, the basics and underlying factors of grounded theory have been discussed.

The foundations of grounded theory are certainly rich and varied, resulting in a complex methodological mix due to the founders' very different personal experiences and academic schools of thought. The complexity of grounded theory has generated many advocates but it also has its critics. Over the years it has been used and adapted in a variety of ways – to be discussed in more detail in the

³³ Talking at a Grounded Theory workshop at Reading University, October 2012.

next part of this chapter – which has resulted in the critics picking up on uses of the method as a more ‘do as you please’ method, rather than along the epistemological bases that it was intended by its founders (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007: 32). Any research method needs to be solid in terms of any epistemological claims it makes to the development of theory and contribution to knowledge, but the claims made by grounded theory in its early days need to be considered in context with their use at the time, hence the importance of addressing its epistemological underpinnings and the research fashion for 1960s sociology in the USA before considering its developments up to the present day.

In 1992 there was a methodological split between the founders Glaser and Strauss. Strauss had been successfully teaching the method during the late 1970s and the 1980s at the University of California, and realized that there was a demand for more writings in the area and a potential manual. Strauss, and one of his students and colleagues, Juliet Corbin, worked together and presented what initially became a more popular version of grounded theory at this time, with their publication *The Basics of Qualitative Research* (1990, 1998). Glaser took issue with some of the ideas and modifications proposed by Strauss and Corbin and so began to self-publish his interpretations of grounded theory on a website³⁴. By this time, after the ‘split’ in 1992, there were three versions of grounded theory emerging (Onions, 2006; McCallin, 2003): the original version, the ‘Glaserian’, and the ‘Straussian’ (terms coined by Stern, 1994). Onions (2006), however, agreed with Walker and Myrick (2006) that the method had not substantially

³⁴ www.groundedtheory.com

changed, with variants of grounded theory tending to be ‘superficially similar’
(Onions, 2006: 4).

CRITIQUE OF GROUNDED THEORY METHOD

In the 1990s, despite grounded theory being described by Miller and Fredericks (1999) as the paradigm of choice for qualitative research in the social sciences, some writers were becoming more and more concerned with its usage, the internal differences (Bryant, 2002, 2003; Charmaz, 2000, 2005; Clarke, 2005; Glaser, 1992, 2002; Stern 1994; Strauss and Corbin, 1998), and its pure induction, preconception and research procedures (Blumer, 1979; Burawoy, 2000; Dey, 1999, 2004; Haig, 1995; Layder, 1993, 1998; Miller and Fredericks, 1999; Robrecht, 1995; Schatzman, 1996; Thomas and James, 2006). Thomas and James (2006: 768) attempted to put some of these criticisms into three broad themes:

1. Grounded theory oversimplifies complex meanings and interrelationships in data;
2. It constrains analysis, putting procedure before interpretation; and
3. It depends upon inappropriate models of induction and asserts from them equally inappropriate claims to explanation and prediction.

The first theme of criticism relating to grounded theory oversimplifying complex meanings and interrelationships will be considered in relation to the iterative process that the methodology has championed since its inception in the 1960s by Glaser and Strauss. Despite it being iterative in nature, it could be argued that because grounded theory appears to follow a series of procedures, it might encourage a researcher to focus more on the method than the voice of the data (Thomas and James, 2006), hence interpreting the data in an oversimplified manner, and therefore missing any possible interrelationships. But as Becker (1996: 70) asserted, there are no prescriptions or recipes or complete guidelines

for conducting social research, therefore a researcher is required to have ‘imagination’ and ‘smell a good problem and find a good way to study it’. In relation to this research and the ‘hunch’ early on about the complex issues facing Local Government leaders in engaging with a variety of audiences, grounded theory seemed to be an acceptable methodology to assist with the complicated procedure of coding and analysis.

Along with providing a supportive outline for understanding how to best use the interpretations of respondents through the philosophical groundings of pragmatism and symbolic interactionism, grounded theory provided me with a methodological strategy to support my initial ‘hunch’ discovered through interpreting the earlier interviews, and to adapt the data to focus more on what was becoming a common theme in all the interviews and research conducted: some respondents attempted positive strategies to improve engagement with some audiences, with others admitting to being almost fatalistic after experimenting with various approaches. Grounded theory opened the data up with this iterative approach to identify the interrelationships, and reduce the possibility that any complex meanings were missed or over-simplified.

The second critical theme that Thomas and James (2006) proposed: how grounded theory can be constraining due to the procedure being put ahead of interpretation, also relates to the computerization of qualitative research, especially grounded theory. Due to the excessive amount of data, memos and observations that are produced in any research project, more and more researchers are relying on the use of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS). There are

many advantages to using some of these software packages – NVivo and ATLAS Ti to name a couple – because they help with the overall project management of a social research project. For those teaching grounded theory to novice researchers, or those not prepared for the demands of analyzing data, the use of CAQDAS can help focus the creation of codes and categories, and can help the learning process of qualitative analysis by supporting structure to help organize research (Blank, 2004).

Urquhart (2003) questioned whether or not the use of grounded theory was just glorifying a coding technique, however Charmaz (2006) argues against this point supporting coding as crucial in grounded theory; but grounded theory is far more. The experience of using manual coding in this research project helped with expediting the analysis without losing any relationship with the data, due to the iterative approach of returning to transcripts for further interpretation.

The final critical theme proposed by Thomas and James involves the allegedly inappropriate model of induction and equally inappropriate models of explanation and prediction. The methodology of grounded theory suggests that theories emerge slowly via a process of gradual abstraction from the data being analyzed; therefore it is an inductive approach or ‘ground-up approach to data analysis’ (Marvasti, 2004: 84) with the theory emerging from the data. The nature of this inductive inquiry is perhaps a product of the time Glaser and Strauss were writing (Thomas and James, 2006: 775), with the psychological dimension to induction referring to human life constantly depending upon a series of assumptions relating to a belief that tomorrow will largely be the same as today; a fire is hot, the sun

will rise and the sun will set (Remenyi, 2013). Within the realms of grounded theory at the time of their early writings, induction was regarded as good because it was able to bind together prediction and order, enabling a researcher to derive theory. However, since the split between Glaser and Strauss in the early 1990s - Strauss arguing that theoretical pre-knowledge flows into interpretation of data, and Glaser almost insisting that it is codes and categories that emerge directly from the data - it is not only Thomas and James who have criticised induction in research, especially in relation to grounded theory. The problems of an inductive procedure have been debated by the great philosophical minds of David Hume and Karl Popper, but the roots of the debate can be considered as far back as Aristotle.

INDUCTION OR ABDUCTION?

Taking into account the Greeks' discovery of mathematics and the art of deductive reasoning – the reasoning deductively of what appears self-evident, not inductively from what has been observed - Aristotle's influence was greatest of all in logic, and he repeatedly admitted the importance of induction - *epagoge* (Russell, 1946). However, Aristotle was aware of it yielding less persuasiveness than deduction due to it being only a probability and not a certainty; but inductive logic did hold the advantage of providing new knowledge where deduction did not. With this, outside of logic and pure mathematics, all-important inferences were argued to be inductive not deductive.

Induction is an independent logical principle, which is a large and difficult subject (Russell, 1946: 607), however without this principle of being informed either from experience or from other logical principles, science could be deemed impossible (612). Karl Popper in his work from 1923 onwards, claimed that science advances by a process of 'conjectures and refutations', where he argues in his book of the same title about the problems of demarcation and induction. Conjectures can be regarded as speculation, a guess or a view, and refutations are when you disprove, oppose or contradict these views. Popper suggested interpreting habits and the belief in laws as 'the product of frequent repetition – of the repeated observation that things of a certain kind are constantly conjoined with things of another kind' (56). Repetition can only be taken from a certain point of view, via a system of expectations, anticipations, assumptions, or interests. And, since human knowledge is mixed with our errors, our prejudices, our hopes and our dreams, it is tradition - things that have been learnt by example, by being told,

reading books, by learning how to criticize, how to tackle and accept criticism, and how to respect truth – that limits our understanding, according to Popper - conjectures and refutations:

...We actively try to impose regularities upon the world. We try to discover similarities in it, and to interpret it in terms of laws invented by us. Without waiting for premises we jump to conclusions. These may have to be discarded later, should observations show that they are wrong (Popper, 1963: 60).

Popper described these ‘theories’ as inventions; conjectures that were to be put to trial and then only eliminated – refuted – if they clashed with observations. He continues in his book to discuss how observation is selective, requiring a chosen object or problem, a definite task or interest, or a point of view. This develops further with Popper arguing that science must begin with myths, leading to the criticism of these myths. This rests on his premise that has already been quoted – ‘nothing can be justified or proved outside of mathematics and logic’ (67), concluding there is ‘no more rational procedure than the method of trial and error – of conjecture and refutation’ (68), with induction making theories only probable rather than certain (71), and that the belief in induction is simply a mistake and a ‘kind of optical illusion’ (Popper, 1953, 1974 – quoted in Thomas and James, 2006: 776).

Part of Popper’s argument is that it is irrelevant how much data is collected in support of a proposed theory, because it is possible that the next data item or collection could contradict the theory, leading to the theory to be falsified – the

notion of falsification. Hence data cannot be used to ‘prove’ a theory, it can however, be used to falsify a theory. Researchers need to be aware and appreciate that a person’s knowledge at any point in time should be considered to be the best understanding at that point in time; or, as proposed by Dekker, there is no such thing as ‘perfect rationality’ (Dekker, 2011b: 13).

Taking these philosophical standings of Popper into consideration, if the idea of inductive logic is refuted, then what form of logic is being demonstrated by grounded theorists, especially since the split and proposed developments over the past thirty years? The initial developments within grounded theory led by Strauss (and later by Strauss and Corbin [1990, 1994], Corbin and Strauss [2008], and Charmaz [2006]) allowed a researcher to take a position with regards to being able to modify or reject concepts during, and because of, observations. Therefore, if users of grounded theory follow this logic laid down by Strauss, as a methodology grounded theory could fall into the spheres of abductive logic rather than inductive logic.

The origins of abduction lie in 1597 when Julius Pacius³⁵ translated the Aristotelian concept of *apogoge*. After this, it generally went unnoticed until the work of Charles Peirce (1839-1914), who identified closely with the work of Aristotle. Peirce used it to denote the only truly knowledge-extending means of inference, claiming it to be categorically distinct from the dual logic of deduction and induction (Reichertz, 2007). Some writers believe Peirce’s interpretation of abduction effectively means the same thing as Aristotle’s *nous*-ing, or better

³⁵ Taken from Reichertz (2007)

known as intuition; to actually see the universe in the particular (Rosensohn, 1974).

Abduction has been defined as the process of reasoning to establish the best explanations; a reasoning process that starts from a set of facts and derives their most likely explanations – a type of informed guess (Remenyi, 2013), or a hunch; a rule governed way to new knowledge. It takes a similar stance to what Popper was referring to when he suggested that science must begin with myths, with repeated observations used as a function to test these conjectures – hunches – by a method of trial and error. Or, to consider it from the view of Peirce and the Pragmatists (1839-1914), ‘guessing...[is] the only way of discovering new knowledge’. To be more eloquent, Glaser and Strauss used the term ‘serendipity’, when a researcher serendipitously has a flash of insight (Remenyi, 2013). However, in the early years of grounded theory Glaser and Strauss stopped alluding to ‘serendipity’ in their attempt to use it to develop theory, rather than stumble upon accidental findings. Since the early days, the interest in the relationship between abduction and grounded theory has renewed the concept of ‘serendipity’ (Reichert, 2007: 214) and Remenyi (2013) in his teachings of grounded theory does warn that abduction - and serendipity - can be an uncertain approach for a researcher to describe their insights as a hunch or a guess. However, he argues that insights in nearly all research are what researchers use to form and follow any significant lines of enquiry and stresses that there is no guarantee that an insight via abduction will lead to an appropriate connection being made.

In fact Strauss did not write about or even refer to abduction in his own work or in his writings with Corbin. More recent writings around grounded theory argue that grounded theory has always been abductive in some shape or form since its inception (Bryant, 2012; Charmaz, 2006; Reichertz, 2007; Remenyi, 2013) and Reichertz (2007) argues that it has become even more abductive since the various developments over the decades.

The social world in which we live in is changing rapidly, with social actions and interactions changing quickly alongside innovative technological advances. Within a society that is becoming more and more reliant and addicted to this technology, the way we see the universe is changing. Reichertz (2007) argues that this therefore makes studying social science and explaining individuals' actions and interactions difficult to derive from the traditional grand theories of the past. He argues that this is because of the inability to be local to an act or situation, and summarizes his argument in favor of abduction by arguing that appropriate new views of social order need to be constantly regenerated. How does abduction make this regeneration of new knowledge possible, especially with regards to grounded theory?

Abduction is a logical way of assembling and discovering phenomena based on the interpretation of collated data, recognizing combinations of this phenomena for which there appears to be no appropriate explanation or rule already in existence. Reichertz (2007) describes it as a surprise, Peirce describes it as taking place like 'lightening' and the thought process should not be hampered by logical rules (Peirce, 1931-1935: Vol V: 117, quoted by Reichertz). Referring back to

Aristotle and the idea of intuition, abduction is when something appears out of the data because of an instinct or something that does not necessarily make logical or linear sense, gradually becoming clear as the data collection and analysis continue, to create an outcome which engenders a new idea – a kind of mental leap (Reichertz, 2007), bringing together phenomena which had not previously been associated with each other.

To apply this level of intuition, a ‘mental leap’, whilst interviewing the participants for the Commission on Elected Mayors, and conducting the initial coding and analysis, the already discussed common theme emerging in the interviews was that of trying to engage the citizen and become more involved in the place they live. Initially for the commission report itself, due to the nature of the questions being proposed by the commission board, the logic of induction was the process used. As more interviews took place, and more participants discussed how they were attempting to better engage, or become fatalistic due to methods failing, an early intuitive ‘hunch’ was turning into common themes, especially with regards to the uses of language, social media and motivation, all with the purpose of building relationships to engage better with communities. The strategy being employed at this point of the project was not dissimilar to the strategy for abduction advised by Peirce.

During abductive logical research, Peirce advised the researcher to take on the role of detective - similar to a modern day air crash investigator - where there is no specific goal because you do not know what you are looking for. He advocates that it is therefore important to let the mind wander and follow a mental game

without rules, which he calls ‘musement’ (Peirce, 1931-1935: Vol VI: 315, quoted by Reichertz.). Reichertz (2007) embellishes this principle of abduction by stressing the importance of an attitude of preparedness to abandon old convictions and seek out new ones. He stresses that the data needs to be taken seriously, whilst simultaneously querying one’s own developed knowledge: ‘A state of preparedness for being taken unprepared’ (Reichertz, 2007: 221). Strauss, during his work with Corbin (1990: 27), despite not referring to abduction as a process of logic directly, did refer to creativity being a vital component of grounded theory. This creativity and their discussion around the procedures of grounded theory allowing a researcher to break through old assumptions and create new, letting the mind wander and make free associations within the data, to generate stimulating questions that lead to discovery, are all notions that work in parallel with the definition of abduction put forward by Peirce and other writers of abduction.

Abduction appears to be a natural phenomenon which everybody performs in one way or another in everyday life, whether it is a perceived crisis or when we do not know what to do next. This is due to it not being a direct reflection of reality, but, to be more precise, a discovery of an orderly mental construct to allow one to live comfortably. As Peirce highlighted, absolute certainty can never be achieved (Reichertz, 2007: 222).

Referring back to the criticism proposed by Thomas and James with regards to induction being an inappropriate model in turn producing equally inappropriate models of explanation and prediction within grounded theory, and despite the origins of grounded theory as an inductive process, recent developments have

taken it beyond the complexities of this ‘optical illusion’ (to quote Popper). While it is definitely not deductive, neither is it really inductive because the iterative nature of grounded theory demonstrates a stronger affinity to abduction. Therefore, breaking down the processes involved with grounded theory, it could be argued that researchers begin with an inductive step with regards to initial coding, hunting for common themes within the data alongside the codes and categories. Following on from this, the second stage of grounded theory is the intellectual jump – the ‘lightening’ moment referred to by Peirce – which adds something that may not already exist as a concept: abduction. Building on this, within grounded theory, I would argue the logical approaches of induction and abduction work in parallel with each other in grounded theory: Induction generating the codes, abduction generating the theories.

Abduction has become a buzzword in social research recently, and, in the opinion of Reichertz (2007), it is because of abduction’s indefiniteness, and the misjudgment of the achievements of abduction, with many users seeing the approach as a process to stress both the logical and the innovative characteristics of the approach. If the goal of grounded theory is to construct theory grounded within data, it could be argued abduction is the appropriate form of logic to help researchers uncover new discoveries in a logically and methodologically ordered way. Or, as Glaser was quoted saying in 1998 (15), ‘the subsequent, sequential, simultaneous, serendipitous, and scheduled nature of grounded theory.’

‘FIT’ AND ‘GRAB’

To continue considering the criticisms and concerns put forward by authors interested in grounded theory, it is not a surprise that some have misunderstood and misinterpreted the dense writings in earlier texts of the method (Charmaz, 2011; Piantanida, Tananis and Grubs, 2004), with some claiming to use it to legitimate their inductive qualitative research with this in turn preventing the researcher from enhancing the analytic power of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2011).

Any methodology and approach to research should always be used with caution, with constant awareness of any possible weaknesses and criticisms (Denzin, 1998; Ellis, 1992; Kelle and Laurie, 1995; Locke, 2001). Despite the ones already discussed in relation to grounded theory, as a research method it certainly offers a plausible, creative and flexible dimension to studying leadership and organizational life. With its acknowledgement of the pragmatist philosophy, grounded theory follows the assertion that a good theory has an element of usefulness in daily practice, not just to social research, but also to practitioners. Using the ‘grounded’ element of the title of the method, Locke (2001) considers the test of a good grounded theory is whether or not it works ‘on the ground’ itself (95-96). In its early days, Glaser and Strauss referred to a grounded theory having ‘fit’ and ‘grab’, ‘relevance’ and ‘modifiability’. Since then, authors have used various different terms – workable, credibility, generalizable, original, controllable, understandable, resonance - to give credence to a grounded theory being useful and fitting situations in the light of every day realities of the particular social phenomena being investigated (Charmaz, 2012:182-183;

Douglas, 2003:53; Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 237). Therefore for a fit, the data and the theory need to entwine together to allow the theory to be understandable to people working in the social situations being studied, and ‘sharpen people’s sensitivities to the ways in which they manage their work and the ways in which they might work differently’ (Locke, 2001: 96). In summary, the idea behind ‘fit’ and ‘grab’ is the close relationship that develops between the researcher, the data, the developed theory and the social situation being studied.

‘CONSTRUCTIVIST’ GROUNDED THEORY – THE GTM USED

Kathy Charmaz’s work on constructivist grounded theory uses the word ‘constructivist’ ontologically to refer to an approach that prioritizes the phenomena of both data and the analysis created from shared experiences and relationships of individuals involved (Charmaz, 1990, 2000, 2001, 2012; Charmaz and Mitchell, 1996). Similar to ‘constructionism’ (both terms are often used interchangeably [Bryman and Bell, 2011]), these social interactions are constantly being produced and revised by the social actors involved. Charmaz understands that it is all these different social perspectives that will judge the usefulness of the final grounded theory. By building on the ideas of ‘fit’, ‘grab’, and later Glaser’s additions of fit, work, relevance and modifiability (Glaser, 1978:4-5), Charmaz uses a strong combination of the following to increase the value of a contribution to knowledge through grounded theory: credibility, originality, resonance and usefulness (2012: 182-183). By credible, she is referring to there being enough evidence for an independent reader to form an independent assessment, and the theory links to the data, the argument and the analysis. Originality is exactly that: is the research original, offering new insights, challenging, refining or extending current ideas, concepts and practices? Resonance is the test to ensure the theory makes sense to the participants or people who share the circumstances being investigated. Finally, usefulness: does it offer interpretations that people can use in their everyday social worlds, can the analysis spark future research and debate, and does it contribute not just to academia, but to a potentially better world? Charmaz argues the combination of these criteria demonstrate the value of a grounded theoretical contribution to knowledge, because ‘knowledge is not

neutral, nor are we separate from its production or the world' (Charmaz, 2012: 185).

For the purpose of this research it is important to stress that Charmaz's writings around constructivist grounded theory (2000, 2006, 2012, 2014), was the approach used for this project, especially since the completion of the commission report. Her interpretation is that the misunderstandings and misperceptions within grounded theory are due to its pragmatic roots, the useful set of procedures the method offers, and its flexible guidelines. Charmaz argues that when using grounded theory, 'one must engage with it as a method and make its flexibility real' (2012: 178). This approach allowed myself as the researcher to take advantage of the methodology's flexibility, without allowing it to become too prescriptive about data collection, coding, and analysis. Taking these constructivist developments in grounded theory, the theories that are being presented later in these writings demonstrate how "grounded" theories can be viewed as products of a series of emerging social processes that are constantly occurring through a variety of interactions, with the role of the researcher being able to construct theories and ideas based around these interactions - both the observed and the experienced.

In Charmaz's view, and for this project, these interactions were of extreme importance to aid the constantly emerging ideas, allowing a return to the research environment as needed to continue and elaborate on conversations; to help make sense, draw on language and construct meanings. As Charmaz herself defines, 'In short, interaction is interpretive' (179).

SUMMARY

Previous interpretations of grounded theory have been criticized by some (Thomas and James, 2006) but supported and grasped by others (Bryant, 2012; Charmaz, 2006, 2012, 2014; Locke, 2001), with the grounded theory of the past competing primarily within an objectivist field, encouraging the founders to potentially disguise the interactive advantages of the method. The more recent development proposed by Charmaz and supported by Bryant (2012) allows grounded theory to be more reflexive for modern social science studies. Taking into consideration the three identified paradigms of grounded theory over the last forty years discussed by Charmaz in her book *Constructing Grounded Theory* – classic, objectivist and constructivist – the various developments and adaptations have seen it resonate with large audiences from various epistemological backgrounds probably enforcing its popularity as a methodology. Whether it is Strauss and Corbin's more accessible, yet more procedural and technical version, Glaser's more positivist and objectivist being more focused and elaborate, or Charmaz's constructivist distancing from any possible objectivist roots, focusing on its interpretive stance, Charmaz supports the grounded theory methodology because it can 'provide a route to see beyond the obvious and [find] a path to reach imaginative interpretation' (2012: 181).

The general approach allowing for an iterative analysis of data between theory development was what allowed this piece of research to take shape with regards to the analysis of leadership processes designed to improve relationships to better engage with a variety of social audiences. Through the conversations and short ethnographies with various elected mayors, public and political figures, civil

servants, police officers, NHS staff and executives from the private sector, the constructivist (Charmaz 2006, 2012) (or constructionist as I will epistemologically refer to it) approach to the methodology allowed for a further in-depth look at various styles of interaction, not just within the political context in the first instance. And it also allowed consideration within other organizational contexts to understand how various individuals define how they engage and communicate to build more effective relationships with their followers. From the initial coding, memos and observations and the interrogation of relevant and peripheral literature, to the detailed framework, grounded theory enabled a journey of discovery (demonstrated in Figure 3.1) to capture ‘hunches’ and initial observations, allowing questions to be raised and adapted throughout the data collection process, prompting both ideas and overall progress to be made to develop these ideas into a more concrete, coherent, useful ‘grounded’ theory.

As a method in general, and within this project, grounded theory allowed a significant degree of flexibility (Charmaz, 2012; Grbich, 2007), allowing the researcher to become creative and adopt aspects of other methods of data collection and analysis, namely organizational storytelling, for successive levels of abstraction via comparative analysis (Olesen, 2007). The use of interviews and the power of stories have also been mentioned in this chapter whilst discussing the initial research strategy for the Commission on Elected Mayors, however, the power of storytelling and narratives in research and in organizational settings will be discussed further in the chapter 5 with relation to the overall research question of examining the building of relationships for better engagement to move Beyond the Collective: How can the complex, iterative processes of relationships help re-

engage individual actors in a collective to tackle the challenges?

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF EMPIRICAL DATA I: *DISENGAGEMENT AND DISORGANIZATIONS IN PRACTICE*

When people talk differently, what they see is different, what they think and do are different, and the consequences are different.

(Weick, 2009: 29)

INTRODUCTION

In the literature review, the focus was on the history and differing theories around leadership, traditionally either as a heroic individual (for example, Carlyle, 1840; Kirkpatrick and Locke 1991; Mann 1959; McGregor, 1960; Stogdill, 1948) or a collective process (for example, Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2012; Collinson, 2005; Conger and Kanungo 1998; Grint, 2005; Rost, 1993, 2008). The role of followers was also considered in terms of how they individually affected leadership (for example, Chaleff, 2003 and Kelley, 2008). The discussion progressed to realize that considering a ‘leader’ or a ‘follower’ as an entity was inadequate in terms of the dynamics of each effectively working together.

To consider leadership as a process, the Leader-Member exchange theory (LMX) (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995) focusing on the dyadic relationship between leaders and followers was discussed, however it was highlighted that it only really focuses on the leader, and not necessarily the relationship. Relational Leadership Theory (RLT), (Uhl-Bien, 2006) and how it expands on why relationships are important in organizations, was then critiqued, moving on to review how social

movements mobilize and engage their members around a collective identity, through examining the work of Melucci (1988).

In this chapter, as well as the three empirical case studies demonstrating disengagement, fragmented relationships, and therefore disorganization, consideration is being given to organizational tensions within relationships, especially when things are going wrong and individuals are at risk of being blamed, how relationships are potentially weak, and why organizations can be at risk of a ‘Drift into Failure’ Dekker (2011b).

Also considered in the literature review, was a critique and focus exploring the importance of the practical and academic work of Ganz (2000, 2008, 2009, 2011), his twenty-eight years working with movements, and his theory of public narrative in leadership: *The Story of Self, Us and Now*. It is this work coupled with relational leadership that has paved the way for the following chapters.

To illustrate these issues of *disorganization* and address the research question (how do the complex, iterative processes of relationships re-engage individual actors in a collective to tackle challenges), the three initial case studies being considered are: 1. one of the world’s largest corporate organizations - BP Plc.; 2. a medium-sized county council – Northtown County Council³⁶; 3. a small blue-

³⁶ Between 10 February 2014 and 21 March 2014, direct observations and interviews with the Assistant Directors as part of a facilitated workshop and three Action Learning Sets.

collar engineering plant, yet with a world recognized brand and a strong historical culture – Aircraft Solutions Ltd³⁷.

Analyzing these three mini case studies, alongside the further research interviews, observations at leadership development workshops, and secondary literature examples, prepares for the presentation of the three-stage heuristic framework in chapter 6: New Beginnings, Building Common Purpose for Action and Collective Learning, all held together with the concept of the Hill of Upward Dissent. Using the basic premise of Ganz's *stories of self, us and now*, I am relabeling the three stages to remove the potentially overused word 'story' and expand the focus of this heuristic to include the importance of dissent, overcoming blame, avoiding silence and encouraging inclusivity if individuals' are to share knowledge, experiences and make a difference. Overall it is intended as a heuristic framework to understand how organizations during times of challenge – public or private – engage people and cement stronger relationships through leadership as a process of facilitation, influence and negotiation, to become more than just a group of individuals and move Beyond the Collective.

Before covering the proposed framework of working Beyond the Collective in chapters 6 in far more detail, I will now document the first of the three examples of *disorganization* - BP Plc.

³⁷ October 2011-October 2013, various diarized and ad hoc interviews over two years, documenting the executives times from recruitment to resignation.

BP AND A BLOWOUT IN THE GULF OF MEXICO

BP Plc. is an organization where the relationships and lines of communication did fracture, with little or no learning due to an endemic culture of blame, fear and disengagement leading to a catastrophic blowout of the rig Deepwater Horizon, exploding and spewing oil into the Gulf of Mexico. Exploring various accounts, newspaper articles, and academic opinions to understand the background to the disaster on 20 April 2010, helps with this discussion in considering what caused BP to face one of its biggest public relation challenges ever.

It resulted in a corporate bill of billions of dollars in claims and fines, a considerable drop in share price, consumer boycotts and a severely damaged reputation, along with eleven lives lost and environmental damage that had never been seen before (Dekker, 2011b). BP had been an organization that prided itself on being at the forefront of ultra-deep-water drilling and the production of oil, turning over record profits year on year, however investigators of the disaster in 2010 called BP, 'the world's most reckless and aggressive oil company' with seven hundred and sixty safety violations being associated with BP compared to ExxonMobile's one (Sachs, 2012: 214-217). Over time, boosting profits led to the cutting of corners affecting safety, which became one of the many systemic vulnerabilities that contributed to the blowout in the Gulf of Mexico (for further information on BP, see appendix 8).

A United States House of Representative Energy and Commerce Committee, led by Henry Waxman, scoured thirty thousand BP documents in their search for evidence for the risks that had been ignored on the Deepwater Horizon rig. He

reportedly told Tony Hayward, the Chief Executive at the time of the disaster, ‘There is not a single email or document that shows you paid even the slightest attention to the dangers at the well. You cut corner after corner to save a million dollars here and a few hours there. And now the whole Gulf Coast is paying the price’ (Broder and Calmes, 2010: 3)³⁸.

One former BP safety engineer was reported as stating how the executives of BP were focused on the easy part of safety with regards to installing hand-rails, wasted hours discussing the importance of reverse parking, and the hazards of not having a lid on a coffee cup – all of which were quick fixes to be seen to be doing something. He stated, ‘[They] were less enthusiastic about the hard stuff, investing in and maintaining their complex facilities... [because] when it comes to oil, they just go after it with a ferocity that’s mind-numbing and terrifying’ (quoted in Sachs, 2012: 219). When safety was easy, it was highlighted as important, however if it was difficult and expensive, conflicting with oil output and profits, it was ignored. Between June 2007 and February 2010, BP accounted for 97 per cent of all willful violations of worker safety in the oil industry (Reed and Fitzgerald, 2011: 134). This type of evidence partially reveals how Hayward and his senior executives became victims of their own hubris, leading BP to take extreme risks almost in the belief that they could not fail – an illustration of Prozac Leadership (Collinson, 2011). Despite all the external and internal investigations, massive fines, and identified safety concerns appearing in all areas of the organization, the leadership responses took the form of superficial sticking plasters and not an antidote for the toxicity of fear that was becoming endemic. It

³⁸ Broder, J. M. and Calmes, J. (2010). ‘Chief of BP, contrite, gets a scolding by Congress’. *International Herald Times*, June 18, 2010.

was the attitudes of the leadership within BP that resulted in the Deepwater Horizon blow out, the deaths of eleven workers, and 4.9 million barrels of oil leaking into the Gulf of Mexico over the course of five months (although more recent estimates have been less – with a US Judge estimating it at approximately 3.2 million barrels)³⁹.

Hayward showed no empathy for what had happened, telling reporters on a visit to the coast of Louisiana that the oil spill was ‘relatively tiny’ compared with the ‘very big ocean’. Finishing off saying, ‘I want my life back’ (Cohn and Moran, 2011: 56). However, even when he was put in front of a congressional hearing, led by Henry Waxman, he still could not answer the committee’s questions despite admitting he was deeply sorry for the disaster. It appeared the more that he was questioned by the committee, the more he demonstrated the lack of accountability of BP’s management structure (Steffey, 2011).

After numerous investigations and inquiries, overall blame for the explosion was directed at the BP leadership for their excessive cost cutting, lack of attention for safety, and their over-optimistic and hubristic approach about being the world leader in extracting oil from such deep and difficult-to-reach areas (Sachs, 2012: 219).

Some of these issues were also prevalent on the North Sea rigs in the 1990s where the company’s ‘safety culture’ contradicted the imposed performance management. Collinson (1999) showed that despite management demonstrating

³⁹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/30843282> dated 16 January 2015, accessed 21 January 2015.

an excellent safety record, this appeared to be more about a corporate commitment than a collective commitment of the entire organization from the bottom up. The research interviewed offshore workers who admitted either not reporting accidents or ‘near misses’, or that ‘they sought to downplay the seriousness of these incidents’ (Collinson, 1999: 579). Despite it being a firing offence not to report incidents, many workers did not do so because of the belief that it was in their best interests not to do so – a manifestation of latent or even destructive dissent. But for safety cultures and learning to be part of an organization, according to Turner (1995), the commitment of the entire organization, the management *and* the workforce is necessary. He stressed the importance of an ‘open learning atmosphere’ so ‘mistakes, errors and near-misses could be discussed openly and without fear of blame or recrimination’ (Turner, 1995: 325). This was not the case in BP due to the fear of blame and punishment.

NO COLLABORATION AT A COUNTY COUNCIL

The second case is a smaller, public organization - Northtown County Council⁴⁰, a council based in the East Midlands of England. They are a medium sized county council serving a population of over five hundred thousand residents⁴¹. A considerable amount of my time was spent facilitating group discussions and conducting interviews with the Assistant Directors (ADs) and Human Resources Manager about existing organizational problems including the following:

- Disconnect in the organization up, down and across;
- Lack of clarity of roles and how they fit into the organization;
- Departments working in silos;
- Feeling isolated and frustrated, knowing the team should pull together but it is not happening;
- Lack of time to collaborate;
- People do not appear to talk to each other anymore, but there is a want to connect with colleagues (disengagement).

All of these were noted and kept in a research notebook to ensure as many of the thoughts and opinions of the ADs and the Human Resources Manager could be referred back to in the follow-up sessions, but also to ensure the first-hand information could be used as a short case showing *disorganization*.

The facilitated group wanted an opportunity to come together and talk about the issues they were facing. There was admittance amongst the ADs that they did not feel like a team due to their individual roles and responsibilities, busy daily

⁴⁰ Northtown County Council – 10 February 2014 and 21 March 2014

⁴¹ 2011 Census

agendas and interactions, which rarely brought them together. They also complained about a lack of communication with the Chief Executive and the Corporate Management Team (CMT), with a sense of feeling that the CMT were working in isolation and not respecting the position of the ADs as assistant leaders. When asked how long ago these problems had been an issue, it was understood to have started when changes to the CMT had been brought in nine months previously. The CMT were viewed by the ADs as a group of individual directors who meet but were not functioning as a team, which was leading the rest of the organization to become fractured.

The Chief Executive of the council was appointed in 2010 and appears to be well liked by the ADs. They did feel that he listened, but he did not seem to act. He had implemented many organizational structural changes, with individuals' job titles, descriptions and responsibilities changing all the time but the changes to the CMT seem to have been the most damaging, according to the ADs.

The outcome of the first session for the ADs involved them identifying a 'wicked' problem that affected all the relevant departments. The aim was that they would meet regularly and act together, pooling their resources to better manage the problem. A second session was put in the diary for me to attend and facilitate again and see what progress had been made.

Almost six weeks later, during the second session, only six of the eleven ADs attended, of which only three had made any progress on the project, and not as part of a collective but individually. When I challenged the group as to why others

were not present, why they had only met twice (of which only four attended), why had only limited progress been made, and where had the enthusiasm for making a difference gone, they all responded with three problems: time, workload and the Directors blocking them. As the conversation continued it transpired that there was a new AD (who joined the meeting later), job roles and responsibilities had changed (again), and no one really knew what each other was responsible for anymore. The session developed into an opportunity for people to gripe and, to halt it, I asked each person a question: 'If they could have anything from the Chief Executive to improve the council, what would it be?' All the answers took the same slant: be more collaborative to initiate delivery and action. They recognized that boundaries needed to be dissolved, with leadership falling to whoever was best qualified for the particular task and that they had to rise above personal power bases to achieve things together. Once the group had realized they all wanted similar things to move forward, the next challenge was how were they going to do this? No one felt they could do so due to time and the culture they found themselves to be working in. They admitted there were pockets of positive change in individual departments, but overall the organization was almost frightened of change.

Since these two sessions, it has been agreed that the lack of collective identity is due to so much change and a lack of authoritative leadership from the top. It is still work in progress, but the next facilitated session is being arranged to bring the Chief Executive and the CMT with the ADs together to start from a 'New Beginning' to give everyone a chance to reestablish their individual identities, roles and responsibilities within the council, to enable them to move forward.

From listening to the ADs, the council is focusing on action all the time, only focusing on the now, struggling to consider the budget constraints of the future with no understanding as to what they are actually there to do. Getting the formal leaders with authority of the organization together to understand the support they could have from the ADs and their teams, by better understanding each other's *stories of self*, has the potential to give the ADs the permission and the motivation to work more collaboratively together to achieve the goals they feel need to be achieved, and not just keep acting on the now in their respective silos.

FIGHTING FIRE AFTER FIRE

The third case studied involves the experiences of a recently recruited executive⁴² in a blue-collar organization based in the Midlands – Aircraft Solutions Ltd. During 2013, the board and Chief Executive of Aircraft Solutions Ltd realized that its current executives were nearing retirement, there had been quality issues with the products, and it was time for a change. The previous Chief Executive was bought back from retirement to head up the team of old and new, and turn the company around for the future. He recruited three new executives, one a new head of quality. She had over fifteen years experience in the engineering industry and was recruited with a mandate to instigate change, improve quality, reduce costs and work with the other executives to move the company forward. Almost immediately she started to look at her team; she built relationships with them, suggested social nights once a month so they could get to know her outside of the work environment, and her them. She began to reassure them that as long as they did a good job, she would support them as best she could; they could talk to her openly and honestly, and report to her any concerns.

After two or three months of working within the company, the head of quality spoke eloquently about feeling that outside of her team there were constant barriers to change: paperwork was not being maintained (which was all essential for audit and aviation safety records), reports were being submitted late and to a very poor quality, and people were ignoring some very serious issues arising during production. She stressed with frustration in one interview (31 June 2014) about how she began to raise these issues at executive meetings with the other

⁴² Executive Director of Quality Control, Aircraft Solutions Ltd. Interviewed 12 October 2013 and 31 June 2014, as well as various ad hoc conversations and short interviews, all documented as ‘memos’ and notes in a research notebook.

executives and some of the other senior engineers, that despite support and understanding from another two recently recruited executives and her team, the three original executives were dismissive of her. She felt they belittled her ideas, with one executive in particular trying his utmost to intimidate her, and resisting any suggested changes to the way things had always been done.

It is now almost a year since the three new executives started, and nine months since my first interview with the head of quality. In a more recent interview with her she sadly admitted to giving up: despite trying to change, to improve quality and build relationships outside of her team, she now knows she is just part of a culture of resistance. When questioned if she felt she was part of a blame culture, she said there was no blame – it was almost a culture of ‘keep quiet and carry on fighting fires’. She said that because of the nature of the Chief Executive’s relationship with the three original executives, the three new individuals felt pushed out. She described how the original executives nearing retirement would have ‘secret’ lunches and discussions, then almost shout and try to control the three new executives as if they were in a parent/child relationship; and if they were not shouting at them, they would just ignore the three new executives and go above their heads to the Chief Executive. The head of quality felt she had a good relationship with the Chief Executive, as do the other two new executives, however they felt he just said yes to everything for an easy life before he retired – for the second time.

Throughout this personal story that was shared first hand, it can be clearly seen how new senior leaders with experience from other companies and industries were

introduced to make a change, and yet within a very short time they became part of a damaging culture of poor relationships, poor communication and erroneous assumptions. The head of quality was fully aware of her fear that the fires that she was constantly fighting could one day explode into something far bigger. She knew the organization was at risk and if it failed it would end up with one individual being blamed, rather than a culture of ignorance and irresponsibility being recognized as one of the main causal factors. She knows that she has now become apathetic, sometimes hostile towards others she works with, and does not say what she knows needs to be said. As she herself said, she now sits in meetings and nods at everything, or contributes with a wave of the hand and a 'whatever'. And since writing this case, she has made contact to say that it got so bad for her that she had no choice but to resign '.....for my own health. The attitudes and culture were making me ill.'⁴³

⁴³ A telephone conversation on 28th January 2015.

DISORGANIZATIONS – WHY?

The above three cases demonstrate various perspectives on how damaging poor relationships can be, blocking important communication channels, causing individuals to become disengaged – leaders or followers – conniving in the prevention of future organizational improvements, and more importantly blocking learning. They demonstrate how disengagement and poor relationships can potentially damage teams by silencing them, with no common goal, thus destroying morale, professional self-esteem, and leading to potential hostility, apathy and even fatalism.

The first case about BP demonstrates what Dekker (2011b) refers to as the ‘drift into failure’ with leaders almost becoming incrementally blind to the realities on the shop floor – as highlighted in the literature review discussing Prozac Leadership (Collinson, 2011). Collinson suggests that the suppression of dissent and any accident-related information, which enhances unintended errors and mistakes in general, is ‘a defensive response to the asymmetrical power relations, blame cultures and institutionalized inequalities of [offshore] employment’ (1999: 595). For organizations to reduce these toxic phenomena, the only place to start is at the beginning in re-affirming strong relationships between individuals, to move beyond being just a collective of colleagues who are able to communicate and dissent appropriately, openly and without fear, to encourage organizational improvement and learning. Sustainable safe production and increasing long term profits seems to be related to the internal politics of organizations and not focusing on the needs of the people and their relationships. Without good relationships none of the rest appears possible.

The overarching focus of the cases is on the failure of well-established hierarchical organizations to engage and motivate their staff, especially during challenging times. Partly it may be due to these organizations becoming so large, multi-layered and so complex in their structures and cultures that the relationships are damaged – in some cases they just do not exist. BP is one of the largest organizations in the world, spread out geographically in many countries, adopting many cultures, laws and regulations. Relationships are virtually impossible on an organizational scale of these proportions. However, the framework in the next chapter has certain aspects which may help in enabling pockets of the organization, as well as the senior executives, to better understand the importance of strong relationships to encourage constructive dissent, reduce blame, and thereby increase learning and organizational improvement, rather than failure.

All three cases reveal problems which also arise from the complexities of the social systems that are the foundational web of organizations. Middle managers and senior leaders are under pressure to meet targets, make a profit (or reduce costs) and if they do not meet expectations and targets they are seen as weak and incompetent, and are punished or fired, by shareholders, board members and trustees while the media engage in their usual hunt for scapegoats (Schumann, 2011). If they do not know the answer, they know that to save their job they need to find an answer quickly, therefore often offering a ‘sticking plaster’ solution which is only partially adequate, or in some cases incorrect and damaging. As the executive at Aircraft Solutions Ltd commented during her interview, ‘Fighting fire after fire, there is not time to work out what the real problems are.’

During the time of the research, further data collated from the thirty three leadership workshops (with a total of nine hundred and seventy four participants) that were attended and facilitated, the feedback from delegates provided evidence of how many middle and senior managers are feeling with regards to the people they work with. Over a third of them raised the issue of disengagement being a ‘wicked’ problem in the work place with just under a third explaining how cross departmental working was becoming more of a difficulty because of the issue of disengagement. For example one delegate from the Scottish NHS stated;

With the increasing pressures of decreasing budgets and constant change in the department, there are constant people issues that need to be addressed because of a distinct lack of engagement from staff, inhibiting us meeting with public expectations.⁴⁴

It can therefore be suggested that amongst the mêlée of performance, profit, politics and production, the most important ‘p’ is being forgotten – people: People are what make all these other ‘p’s’ happen.

⁴⁴ Senior nurse at a Leadership Development workshop – Scottish NHS, Pollock Halls, St Leonard Hall, Edinburgh, 21 November 2013.

ANALYSIS OF *DIS*ORGANIZATIONS IN PRACTICE

These three cases, alongside comments and feedback from the workshops, discussed to help investigate what engagement and disengagement both mean in organizational contexts across both the public and private sectors. This research and extensive direct opinion from workshop delegates has been used to help build upon the serendipitous ‘hunches’ identified during the initial data collated for Elected Mayor research for the Commission Report. Analyzing the opinions and problems of the middle to senior managers, approximately eight of every ten discussed related to problems with people: (dis)engagement, motivation, challenging behaviours, discipline, lack of clarity of roles and personal responsibility, no decision-making, lack of support, no integration across teams or departments, no open and honest communication, new team members, old team members, people changing the agenda for personal gain, low morale, underperforming staff, too many leaders, personal resistance, no collaboration, blame, and the list goes on. Examples of a few things that were said include: ‘coordinating with different departments’; ‘relationships across teams’; ‘lack of time causing clashes between teams’; ‘difficult people causing others to become disengaged’; ‘blame culture in pockets of the organization causing people to cover their backs’; ‘no taking responsibility, moving goal posts, no cohesion. How can we deliver a service in a safe and timely manner?’; and, ‘lack of integration in relation to motivation and staff positivity’.

The other problems that were raised may not have been people-orientated as such, but many of them affected the way people work. For example some of the more popular and current themes included budget cuts, lack of resources, poor

equipment, ridiculous red tape and bureaucracy, complex processes, and too much change. Many of these common workplace problems also seemed to relate to poor relationships between individuals in an organization: leaders and followers, leaders and other leaders, followers and other followers. Within any collective group, organization, team, political party, faith, union, or family, for progress to be made a relationship is necessary: as Ganz, (2008)⁴⁵ suggested, it is ‘Through shared experience of our values that we can engage with others, motivate one another to act, and find the courage to take risks, explore possibility and face the challenges we must face’.

Whether it is the city leaders of local authorities in the UK and other countries visited for the commission report, or the public and private organizations questioned and observed, the primary focus of this study turned to what appears to be *disorganizations* rather than organizations. By that I mean that they require more effective relationships between all participants, not just the leaders as individuals, or followers as individuals, but everyone as a form of collective. The consideration of the empirical data from the three studied *disorganizations* compared to the three empirical case studies demonstrating engagement and more effective relational leadership styles, will be on explaining how the power of stories can strengthen these relationships (Ganz, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014) and how these stories can be framed to work beyond a collective. The data from the workshops and the cases studied, demonstrate how the *disorganizations* appear to be divided, confused, passive, reactive, inactive, and drifting, all of which put

⁴⁵ ‘What is Public Narrative’ by Marshall Ganz
http://wearesole.com/What_is_Public_Narrative.pdf

these *disorganizations* at risk of fraction, gossip, ineffective members, firefighting problems, absenteeism, blame, and in the worst case scenario, failure and disaster. Do the empirical examples of better engagement and stronger relations counteract these negative states?

Taking Ganz and his public narrative, it could be argued that most organizations facing the problems of *disorganization* are too busy focusing on the *story of now*, applying action and answers that may seem appropriate at that time but which result in a continuous cycle of fire fighting and quick fixes. In many cases, to provide an answer and be seen as an effective leader, without delay – in effect to be seen to be doing something – a problem is often treated as ‘tame’ without due consideration to what the problem actually is. The wrong answer, or the wrong process applied, often causes another problem to materialize, either in the form of a crisis, or with an individual being blamed for doing what they thought was right at the time. These situations potentially ricochet around the organizational boundaries leaving little time to actually focus on who the actors are, what they could have done to help, and how they could have more effectively contributed to make a difference, rather than rushing an inappropriate solution.

The actors involved were often disenchanted, disengaged, demotivated, therefore potentially damaging to the organization, and fearful of speaking up. Wherever an actor is within the hierarchy of an organization, they all potentially become part of a cycle of disengagement. The leaders who are part of the synopticon, being watched by the many actors in their teams, casting their shadows of influence, can be as damaging to this cycle and *disorganization* as the negative

fatalist – a fatalistic individual who is damaging to the organization - who is not contributing on the factory floor, or who is not delivering a satisfactory service, or is being complacent about a procedure that has been wrongly implemented. The *disengaged* leader often generates *disengaged* followers in a *disorganization*.

The three empirical cases documented above, effectively demonstrate how individuals across these organizations have been struggling to make progress in challenging situations because of weak relationships, widespread confusion and quick fixes not providing any of the answers to the organizations' problems; employees are or were disengaged, and there is silence, feelings of disconnect, and a fear of blame. The rest of this chapter is going to consider a couple of the more frequently identified issues that affect working relationships and cause individuals to become disengaged: Blame Culture and the feeling of not being able to have a voice and speak up.

BLAME CULTURE: WHAT IS FORGIVABLE AND WHAT IS PUNISHABLE?

Organizations that do not address learning from mistakes, therefore focusing on failure and negative stories becoming gossip and rumour, have the potential of putting themselves at risk of ‘drifting into failure’ (Dekker, 2011), because failure is an inevitable option in any context – it is probably going to happen. This is exactly what happened to BP Plc. with regards to the devastating Deepwater Horizon disaster in the Gulf of Mexico discussed earlier in this chapter.

How an organizational culture defines and understands errors can make the difference between a blame culture where people cover things up, and a culture of openness and honesty for encouraging learning. Within a blame culture there is a deep fear of confession rooted in the negative consequences of becoming a scapegoat. This tends to happen in organizations which consider that all errors are equivalent and therefore fail to classify them appropriately, thus not enabling individuals to feel safe in the knowledge of what is acceptable or what is wholly unacceptable. A more candid approach has far-reaching consequences for encouraging learning and exacting accountability, ensuring an individual takes personal responsibility to improve the organization. A lack of feedback from individuals to those in formal authority in organizations contributes to a blame culture. Burying, and not speaking up about, an error is due to individuals not understanding if they will be forgiven for an error, or punished.

Early research into workplace disasters by Turner (1978, 1994, 1995) considered the importance of communication and how barriers led to accidents and mistakes.

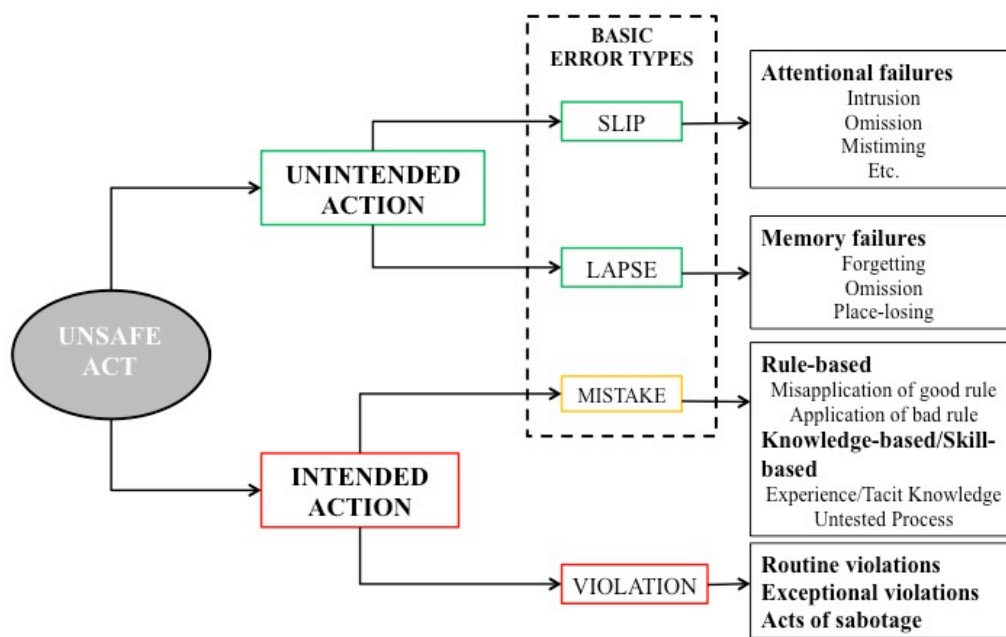
He argued that mistakes and disasters accumulate because they are ignored or misinterpreted as a result of habit, routine, false assumptions, poor communication, and the disregard for rules and instructions.

To help understand the difference between the forgivable and unforgivable errors, the work by James Reason - widely regarded as the originator of such an approach, and probably most well known for his work around the 'Swiss Cheese Model' (Reason, 1990) - considers how unsafe acts and latent conditions - when combined - can break through safety barriers and safeguards, resulting in an accident or failure. When referring to these 'unsafe' acts, Reason (1990, 2008) argues that much of the issue derives from the absence of a universally agreed definition of error; all we have is an acknowledgement that the act is a deviation away from the intended direction. He discusses intention relating to the prior intended action relating to the error. If it was intended, did it go according to plan and achieve its desired outcomes? If it went according to plan and was a success, then there is no reason for concern. If it did not, was it a failure due to an absent-minded slip or lapse, was it a failure in the planning, a wrongly applied rule or misinterpreted process, or was it a lack of experience? An intended error however is when the error is deemed as successful and is a deliberate act of deviation from the rules, procedures or planning to cause sabotage within the context. This is therefore non-compliance and deemed to be a violation of standard practice.

To understand Reason's classification of errors, it is best divided into two: the unintended errors and the intended (see figure 7.2). Cognitively, he considers the unintended errors as basic error types defined as slips and lapses, with the

intended errors defined as mistakes and violations. Reason's definition of a mistake can be interpreted as an intended error but I will argue this is not necessarily the case, and for all of these to be treated as intended and similarly to violations (and handled with an inappropriate reaction by those in formal authority), has the potential to damage relationships and encourage silence because of the fear of being blamed.

Classification of Errors



Taken from 'Human Error', James Reason (1990, 2009), p207

Figure 4.1 – Classification of Errors

A slip is classified as an attentional failure because a person's attention is a limited resource. It is easy for an individual to direct their attention to one thing, in turn withdrawing it from another. This new direction of attention could be unrelated to the task in hand with continuous actions therefore taking an unintentional path. Usually linked with absent-mindedness, in his research Reason (2008: 42) associates slips with highly familiar and relatively unchanging surroundings, which are largely automatic in their execution. Another factor in a

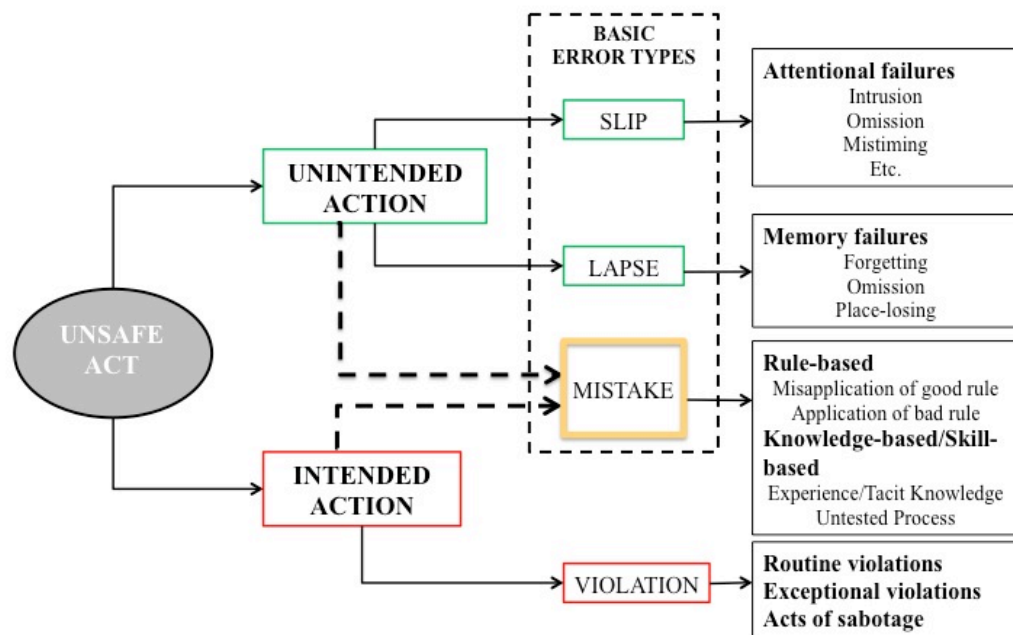
slip is linked to an intrusion of the over-familiar action, which can take the form of an external distraction or a preoccupation. Slips, despite being wholly unintended, can be highly damaging and result in disaster if they go unattended and not applied to future learning. With the majority of them being corrected by the individual 'just doing their job', some may lay dormant if not appropriately communicated and disseminated within a collective or organization.

The other unintended action is a lapse. These are usually associated with being a memory failure including forgetting and place losing. A lapse can arise at one or more opportunities whilst following a standard procedure or plan. Within cognitive psychology it is when the input has insufficient attention given to the to-be-remembered routine and therefore becomes temporarily lost or suffers interference within the short-term or long-term memories. It can also be those 'tip of the tongue' moments (Reason, 2008: 41) when recall has been interrupted or temporarily forgotten.

Before considering the intended violations, those acts of the saboteurs that are intending to cause damage to an organization and its people, the definition and acceptance or non-acceptance of mistakes needs to be discussed. As figure 7.3 suggests, however, mistakes can be both unintended and also intended. This is where mistakes need to be handled with extreme caution in organizations and properly investigated. If it is found to be a mistake through non-compliance or deliberate non-malevolent deviations from a rule, plan or procedure that was intended, the bad outcome may not have actually been intended. Individuals could undertake these types of mistakes for several reasons. These include lack of time

to complete a task, and complacency in thinking a particular rule or procedure is not actually necessary at that particular time or context. Other causes of bad outcomes through mistakes are linked to them usually being skill-based, rule-based or knowledge-based failures. There are multiple causal factors behind these types of mistakes, usually due to the nature of these rules and an individual's knowledge being dictated by the formal leaders in authority at the blunt end of the organization. Rules might be being broken with good intent – a *bricoleur*, a do-it-yourself pragmatic experimenter (Grint, 2005c: 133) - however they may have been misinterpreted, misapplied or mis-trained therefore causing an unsafe act. It is this blurring of where a mistake sits in Reason's classification that causes many organizations to blame individuals without an appropriate understanding of why an individual did what they did at the time of action; therefore damaging relational interactions that are associated with good leadership, for example egalitarian, mutual, collaborative, and two-directional (Fletcher, 2012).

Amended Classification of Errors



Adapted from 'Human Error', James Reason (1990, 2009), p207

Figure 4.2 – Amended Classification of Errors

Reason (2008: 51) does suggest that not all mistakes result in unsafe acts, but I argue that associating them with being 'intended' can immediately appear to associate the blame with the individual. By using the classification of skill-based, rule-based or knowledge-based, I will now outline why there should be a 'dotted line' linking the issue of mistakes in error classification to both, being potentially intended or unintended.

Reason suggests that skill-based mistakes are often made when an individual cuts corners, taking the path of least resistance or when they do not have adequate time to complete a task. The first explanation of an incomplete action because of cutting corners is intended and should be addressed by re-training or extra supervision, however if the incomplete action is a result of time pressures from formal authority or the workloads are set too high, then issues deeper inside the

organization need to be addressed. This is where an investigation needs to consider the deeper vulnerabilities that explain why a person may have felt the need to cut corners, what the underlying issues of additional pressures from formal authority were, and the workload of the person being investigated. Only after an investigation, can the appropriate training, advice or possible punishment be implemented. The important part of this is that learning can then be appropriately and accurately communicated and disseminated across the organization, with others who may be feeling the same pressures being able to admit that they have also been cutting corners, feeling overworked and under extreme pressures.

Rules and regulations in organizations are all used by those in formal authority attempting to control the behavior of employees and contractors, especially with regards to problematic or risky situations (Reason, 2001). The initial intentions of rules and regulations applied across organizations are to help individuals get the job done and to avoid foreseeable hazards. But these same rules and regulations may start to cause problems and rule-based mistakes due to continuous amendments and changes to these rules. On occasion these amendments to rules are ‘knee-jerk’ so the leaders in formal positions are seen to be ‘doing something’ about a situation, without actually consulting the individuals at the sharp end to understand why a new rule or amendment is actually necessary or relevant. These types of reactions - applying a ‘sticking plaster’ over a potentially good rule that had only been misapplied due to misinterpretation - can lead to a new bad rule being applied correctly, and yet it was originally an inappropriate but uncontested rule that was the fault. The mistakes caused by bad rules often result in necessary

violations because they might, according to the perpetrator, be the only solution (Reason, 2001: 53). As with skill-based mistakes, the misapplication of any rule – good or bad – could be the result of deeper vulnerabilities within the organization and there are often multiple causalities for an individual's mistake. Since knowledge is subjective and specific to each individual based on their experiences, training and skills, knowledge-based mistakes are rarely associated with specific training or specific rules and procedures. Instead they often occur in circumstances that are novel or atypical, involving an unexpected occurrence that is either rare or consists of an unlikely combination of familiar circumstances, and when combined prove unmanageable for the knowledge base of the individual or collective (Reason, 2001). To overcome these knowledge-based mistakes, and conduct an effective investigation to consider what the multiple factors were that caused the mistake, requires individuals to be able to have a voice and speak up. This helps in appreciating that knowledge is finite and all eventualities cannot be trained for and covered by layers of rules and process. However, many individuals in a culture of blame do not speak up, and therefore become silenced.

SILENCE: WHEN INDIVIDUALS FEEL THEY HAVE NO VOICE

The damaging affects of silence as a ‘defensive routine’ (Argyris, 1990; Van Dyne, Ang and Botero, 2003) relates to when individuals cover up issues they do not want to discuss, feel unable to discuss or feel they will be reprimanded for raising, and this leaves issues unattended and at risk of drifting into failure. One of the leading reasons for this silence is the risk an individual is taking if they do disclose information about an observation an incident or an action, especially in pressured situations. In the human factors discipline this risk is often exacerbated, because of the confusion over what is a ‘forgivable’ mistake and what is ‘punishable’ (Dekker, 2009: 57), discussed above.

Why can silence be so unintentionally damaging? In most cases it is not just the fear of upsetting colleagues, avoiding embarrassment or confrontation. It is also the fear that if they do express critical comments or suggest alternative courses of action, display anxiety or communicate difficult messages to those in formal or informal authority, they will be at risk of shortening their career goals, or in some cases being sanctioned and made an example or even losing their jobs (Collinson, 2012; Kish-Gephart, Detert, Trevino, and Edmondson, 2009; Perlow and Williams, 2003). The cost of silence can be damaging on both the individual level as well as the collective and organizational level – as was the case with BP and Aircraft Solutions Ltd. For the individual, leader or follower, it can generate feelings of humiliation, anger and resentment, which, if left to fester and not expressed, can affect interactions with others, undermining creativity, productivity and performance (Perlow and Williams, 2003).

Silence has been defined as a 'defensive routine' (Argyris, 1990; Van Dyne, Ang and Botero, 2003) when individuals cover up issues they do not want to discuss, leaving issues unattended and at risk of drifting. This can only exaggerate negative inhibitive emotions like anxiety and resentment, repressing feelings, compounding defensiveness, and contributing to a disconnection in relationships (Perlow and Williams, 2003). Organizations and teams that confront geographical boundaries are particularly at risk of silence in failing to exchange and share information, leading to misinterpretation and a disintegrative effect on the collective (Cramton, 2001).

Social movement theorists discuss how the culture of collective action is buttressed around emotions orientated to mobilize and engage individuals, or not: or as Tarrow (1998: 112) suggests, 'They are given an emotional valence aimed at converting passivity into action'. Other authors within the field agree that feeling and thinking are inseparably intertwined (Barbalet, 1998; Damasio, 1994; Gould, 2004; Jaggar, 1989; Lutz, 1986; Rosaldo, 1984; Williams, 1977), with feelings being one of the many ways that individuals gain knowledge and understanding, interpret processes that affect external opportunities, comprehend how they are understood and responded to, and how resources are communicated and shared, and, above all, understand why collective action succeeds or fails (Gould, 2004).

Emotions, as referred to in the social movement literature (or arousal, as referred to in the field of psychology) is a subject matter within itself, varying from individual to individual, discipline to discipline, affecting the quality of learning and performance and how it is researched. Within human factors, there are some

people who cope with stress, fatigue and pressure; others revert back to first learned cultural, individual or experiential responses (Allnut, 1982) and any recently learnt skills will tend to dissipate, with new problems treated the same as old problems, all resulting in many possible clues or creativity to attend to the actual problem being missed (Weick, 1984). Emotions in this work take the form of arousal and how they have been interpreted within the social movement literature (Gould, 2004).

The issue of how much emotion or arousal is necessary to learn new ways and cope with the challenges being faced is contested in the social movement literature: it is a balancing act to maintain enough tension to mobilize the collective, without causing distress and introducing the kind of barriers to action that Ganz (2010) has observed in practice. In leadership studies, Heifetz's (1994: 106) metaphorical pressure cooker reproduces this tension with the leader (cook) regulating the pressure by turning the heat up or down to keep the pressure within its safe limits – because people will not learn creative new ways of doing things if they are overwhelmed. However, removing all of the stress has the potential of under arousal, eliminating the impetus to do anything: if there is no heat nothing will cook. Weick's (1984: 41) earlier work also compliments this: arousal levels need to be maintained at 'modest intensities' to keep any interferences of emotion to a minimum and to allow for people to work towards 'small wins' that allow for a collective to notice an immediacy, tangibility and controllability that helps to maintain arousal at modest intensities, and produces visible results. Allowing people too much time to think or by not empowering them depersonalizes the

problem, lowers an individual's arousal, leading to inactivity, apathy and, in the worst cases, fatalism.

SUMMARY

Using the findings from the three cases (two via personal first hand research and one studied via secondary literature) and the observations and opinions from the facilitated leadership development workshops, chapter 5 will continue to understand how better relationships could be established during challenging times by focusing on three empirical case studies outlining examples of effective relational leadership and improved engagement of individuals to move Beyond the Collective, outlining the proposed heuristic framework that builds on Ganz's public narrative of story of self, us and now, action and celebration. I suggest a collective appears to require what I will call 'New Beginnings', to work to 'Build Common Purpose for Action', and finally to 'Collectively Learn', all the time taking into consideration the past to appropriately take action in the present, and learn for the future, attempting to address the 'space between' that Uhl-Bien (2012) is aware requires further research and consideration with regards to RLT. Ganz (2010) talks about heart, head and hand with regards to mobilizing individuals to be motivated to work together, devise a strategy and take action. I am taking this further and moving it into an organizational context by considering an individual's need for passion and purpose to participate. The first two stages of this framework for the complex weaving of organizational relationships, are to understand who a person is and what makes them passionate, why, for what purpose, and how they intend to contribute and participate as a collective 'us' to make a difference. The final stage of my proposed framework only appears likely to be successful if the first two stages are given the time, and the people are given the respect, to establish who they are to contribute to the collective – in other words, the time to build relationships. If the first two stages are ignored, and the

focus is always on the now, the poor relationships seem at risk of encouraging disruptive working environments, with poor communication channels, no trust, and a pathological culture of blame (Westrum, 1993).

Before discussing the proposed framework in chapter 7, it is important to consider the empirical data demonstrating three situations where relational leadership, better engagement and the importance of dissent are making a difference to individuals working together in a collective. They are examples of how openness is necessary to blend together and improve the relationships between all individuals involved, whether formal leader or informal leader, follower or observer: openness appears to be the thread that holds it all together.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS OF EMPIRICAL DATA II: HOW DO SOME LEADERS BETTER ENGAGE INDIVIDUALS?

In the previous chapter, three examples of *disorganization* were considered, along with a comprehensive outline of some of the ‘people’ issues that were impacting on these troubled organizations and the actors involved. This chapter is going to review three further empirical cases, all of which have been working differently to better engage with employees, citizens or colleagues. What is it that these organizations have been doing differently? How have they gone about focusing on individuals and gaining a collective *story of us*?

All three of these cases involved direct interaction with all parties mentioned with transcripts, notes and various follow-up questions all being documented in research notebooks. All quotes, observations and comments are taken either directly from the interview transcripts, the recorded observational notes, or notes made during informal communications with the subjects. Any comments that have been taken from secondary source will be appropriately referenced.

The first of the three cases is the story of Naheed Nenshi, a ‘nerdy’ professor who decided to run for Mayor of Calgary in Canada. It focuses on how he realized the importance of re-engaging the citizens of Calgary by doing ‘politics differently’ through conducting a very different campaign, and then steering ‘politics in full sentences’ once he won the election by a considerable majority. The transcripts from the interviews, conversations with citizens, along with social media accounts

and local news stories, have allowed the construct of a case that demonstrates the importance of engaging people by attempting to think how they think, using language that they understand, and ensuring they feel involved and able to make a difference. The data was collated from meeting with Nenshi and two members of his team, hearing his story first hand. Further data has been collated by following Nenshi and his Communications Director via social media: Twitter, Facebook and YouTube, as well as interviewing and holding informal ‘chats’ with local people when visiting the city of Calgary.

The second case study demonstrates the importance of relationships for the Red Arrows – the Royal Air Force Aerobatic Display Team. Despite being amongst the best pilots in the Royal Air Force, the importance of how people engage with each other, the importance of being able to dissent, and the importance of understanding that people do make mistakes and therefore they are to be learnt from, are all major considerations during pilot selection for the team. By spending considerable time with the team during briefings, debriefings at RAF Scampton, and observing the team whilst out working with the public, alongside some one-to-one interviews with current and previous members of the team, empirical evidence was gathered showing how the team work together to ensure they remain amongst the best aerobatic display team in the world.

The third and final case showing better engagement of individuals is based around a mini ethnography and a series of interviews at Leicester City Council, around the end of the city’s first elected mayor’s first one hundred days. It outlines the story of how Sir Peter Soulsby (the City Mayor) and his team of senior officers

and Assistant Mayors (members of his cabinet) work differently and more efficiently, by ensuring there is engagement in the city's good news and bad news stories, so that the public are engaged with what the Mayor's office is doing about city issues.

All these cases empirically demonstrate how the importance of leaders in formal positions can encourage individuals to develop better relationships by engaging and including individuals to work more effectively as a collective, being open, more honest, and learning from mistakes ensuring dissent is appreciated and required if there is to be improvement – all by realizing there is a common purpose, or to use Ganz's term, a *story of us*.

DOING POLITICS DIFFERENTLY: HOW A ‘NERDY PROFESSOR’ ENGAGED WITH THE CITIZENS OF CALGARY

Popularity is rooted in doing more and more to engage with the people of
Calgary – people of all ages.⁴⁶

The ‘nerdy Professor’ (as he described himself in an interview with me in November 2011)⁴⁷ is Naheed Nenshi, now the re-elected mayor of Calgary. He was born in Toronto, Ontario and raised in Calgary, Alberta by his Tanzanian parents, Noorjah and Kurban, who were South-Asian-origin immigrants to Canada. After leaving school he attended the University of Calgary, where he studied and received a Bachelor of Commerce degree in 1993. He continued his education and completed a Master of Public Policy from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University in 1998. He then started working for McKinsey & Company where he stayed for several years before starting his own consulting business, which included being an instructor in non-profit management in the Bissett School of Business at Mount Royal University. He was also a regular contributor to the municipal affairs column for the *Calgary Herald*. His main area of interest academically (and personally) is cities and how they can work better; and he still occasionally guest lectures at the JFK School of Government at Harvard about city leadership. Nenshi believes, ‘Urbanization is an important change with the population in cities constantly increasing’ (Nenshi, 2011). He has written about how cities can retain young professionals, and he

⁴⁶ Taken from the interview with Naheed Nenshi held in his office at Calgary City Hall, Calgary, Canada: 15 November 2011

⁴⁷ Taken from interview with Naheed Nenshi held in his office at Calgary City Hall, Calgary, Canada: 15 November 2011

spoke during the interview about how ‘it is important [that] young people are involved.’

People need to understand the importance of cities – we are moving to a world where the primary driver is the city. Therefore there is a need to engage and attract the brightest young people to come to the city and stay.’

The city of Calgary is in the province of Alberta, Canada, located in the south of the province, approximately eighty kilometres east of the front ranges of the Canadian Rockies, with a population of approximately 1,096,833 (2011) covering an area of 726.5km⁴⁸. An elected mayor and fourteen elected councillors run the City Hall, with all of them being Independent and not party politically aligned. In most municipalities in Canada, city councils are not involved in the mainstream political parties. The exceptions are Vancouver, Montreal and Quebec. Despite this, Vancouver’s Mayor is a politician who set up his own party, Vision Vancouver, and is considered by Canadians as an Independent.

This case study empirically demonstrates how Nenshi and his team of advisors shared their story about how they considered a new way of doing politics as a beginning, to work with and better engage an apathetic city. During the 2010 campaign, the average age of a citizen in Calgary was younger than in most Canadian cities: 35.7 years. The citizens are considered to be a highly educated, fiscally conservative multicultural meritocracy, who see themselves as ‘innovative risk-takers who are not afraid of change’ (to quote Nenshi’s own words from one

⁴⁸ Taken from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calgary>

of his campaign speeches that he gave me a copy of during the interview). However, people who live outside Calgary view Calgarians as predictable and shortsighted people.

As an educated gentleman, returning to the city where he was raised, he had not realized that he was coming home to do things differently for the citizens of Calgary. What Nenshi did know, is the importance of engaging with the local people, whether they were still in school, a student at the university, a Punjabi taxi driver, or a single parent; he realized it was to be about ‘politics in full sentences’ – being a politician who uses a common language that the citizens can connect with, understand and relate to.

This 2010 mayoral campaign was not the first time Nenshi had ventured into local politics. In 2004, he ran for a seat on Calgary's city council, albeit unsuccessfully. During the face-to-face interview held with him in November 2011 on why he had decided to run for Mayor in 2010, he passionately replied, ‘How can I make Calgary work better?’

His initial thoughts as to who should run for mayor of the city, was to encourage a younger person (he was only 38 at the time of the election) to stand. Those who Nenshi did ask responded saying things like ‘they [the councillors] fight too much.....It’s unglamorous.....There’s a huge pay cut.’ Nenshi spoke to a few close friends and his family, and decided he should stand himself: ‘If you are keen, then why not do it yourself! I have passion for this city.’

Referred to by Koentges (2011) as the ‘precocious ethnic kid from NE Calgary’, he launched his own grassroots campaign with hardly any money, and no party political involvement. However, this was irrelevant to Nenshi; what did matter was his profile. That is when he realized he had to do things differently, but how? He realized it had to be about, ‘Politics in full sentences.’

By starting at the beginning, Nenshi was able to surround himself with a trusted campaign team, appointing his best friend from his first year at the University of Calgary as his campaign director. Together they worked on his mannerisms, but there was little to be done to tone his exuberance. The team branded Nenshi as “he is who he is”. To prove Nenshi was going to do things differently and conduct ‘politics in full sentences’, he realized he had to transform the type of conversation he had to hold with the citizens of Calgary. He did this by ensuring the heart of his campaign was about stressing the word “*and*” in a sentence; not the word “*no*”. The use of *and* was to reform the conversation so that people could get more involved themselves.

At the beginning of the campaign, it was not looking good for Nenshi, with the polls putting him in tenth place with less than 4 per cent of the support. As his campaign gathered momentum, he realized he could use his growing popularity. Nenshi eventually won the role of Mayor of Calgary by gaining 40 per cent of the vote, with a turnout of 53 per cent. The previous mayoral election turnouts had been well below 40 per cent (2007, 33 per cent; 2004, 18 per cent). He won it because of his moral belief, ‘Old fashioned engagement – government matters so there is a need to tell the voter why,’ (Nenshi, 2011).

To better engage with the people of Calgary, he knew he had to connect with people – to find a common purpose for the city. Nenshi realized engaging with the younger voters, especially students, was extremely important during his campaign, especially with the average citizen age being below forty years old. Nenshi was already personally adept using Twitter and Facebook, so he ensured that social media played a pivotal role in attracting younger people to his campaign. He started by recording a Youtube clip in ‘plain English’ stressing ‘3 themes’ for Calgary, not a manifesto of complicated policies. His Facebook page was the first out of all the mayoral candidates to reach 10,000 likes, and he constantly tweeted what he was doing, where he was going and what he was thinking – telling his *story of self*.

Many believed that it was this increased use of social media and the use of the phrase ‘better ideas’ that encouraged the younger voters in Calgary to vote for Nenshi. However, as well as the use of social media, Nenshi went out and spent time giving speeches in elementary and junior high schools. By engaging the young people of Calgary who were still at school, although they couldn’t vote, they were able to go home and tell their parents about him and his better ideas.

He ensured the young adults were not forgotten; the students, the first time voters, the fatalistic and apathetic. Nenshi realized that by attending the handful of bars and cafes where he knew young people frequented to discuss their ideas for the future, he could communicate to them his ‘better ideas’ as well as hear back their thoughts. One evening, past midnight, Nenshi was three hours late for an arts forum. There was a line outside the door. He wasn’t sure if it was too late and

that he might not be able to go in. He then heard a loud male voice shouting, ‘Oh my God, it’s f***ing Nenshi.’ He was ushered in. It would appear he had gone from being the ‘nerdy professor’ to being ‘charismatically cool’ (Nenshi’s own words in the interview). As he was being pushed into the bar, dazed at his emerging popularity, he was apparently mobbed by women! They all knew who they were going to vote for. They spoke to him about how high the stakes were, which better ideas they liked and how many people they had told them to, how it was wonderful to finally meet him, but he needed to keep doing what he was doing. Had he actually made an impact on the usual apathetic youth of Calgary?

Nenshi and his team knew that although social media had its advantages of reaching the masses, it was not necessarily going to reach people directly in their living rooms; it is an impersonal method, and will not necessarily cross generations. His team (two of which were with him at the time of his interview) created a programme to target people who would not normally get involved with an election; they invited people to meet Nenshi at coffee parties. For the people who thought only birds tweeted, and Facebook was literally a book, the idea of these focused gatherings in living rooms and local community centres was for people to meet and have a conversation with Nenshi face to face. This innovative way of engaging with people on a personal level included involving many who had never been involved in an election before. Despite some coffee parties reaching people in the hundreds, others were attended with just a few dozen. The numbers did not matter to Nenshi because what he wanted to happen was a two-way conversation with people, supporting his idea of ‘politics in full sentences’ with citizens being given the opportunity to talk back. It was not just about

Nenshi, it was about the realization there was an opportunity to make it about Calgary, establishing a *story of us* to build common purpose. The citizens began to engage with Nenshi's authenticity and sincerity, finding him appealing rather than the usual 'opinionated' politician. The volunteers becoming involved in the campaign represented a weird mix of intelligence consisting of corporate lawyers, students, firemen and retired professors, all able to connect with citizens. However, there was one part of Calgary where historically campaigning had been challenging – North-East Calgary.

Some politicians agreed that campaigning in NE Calgary is an apparent art. This part of Calgary consists of complex cultures and ethnic communities, where they have historically voted for the winner. During Nenshi's campaign, because of his Tanzanian roots ('because he's brown'), his Campaign Director having Caribbean roots ('being black') and half the people on his team representing other cultures ('some shade in between'), they would have NE Calgary 'in the bag' (Koentges, 2011). Nenshi knew it would not be that easy to engage and involve NE Calgarians. One big challenge facing any of the candidates in NE Calgary is that 'door knocking' doesn't work. The reason is that people do not really answer their doors; if they do, their English is limited so they do not always understand complex ideas and policies. They cared about their environment, facilities for senior citizens and education for all. They did not really care for the usual complicated mayoral policies. The only way to engage the people in NE Calgary was, according to Nenshi's team, through community leaders. These leaders were at the various mosques, churches and temples. To show he was serious, Nenshi and his team published all of their 'better ideas' in more than a dozen different

languages, costing them virtually nothing, because they realized they could use the free Google app to translate it all for them.

Nenshi had been brought up in Marlborough Park, NE Calgary, so he knew that to understand the communities, you also needed to tour the area. He knew he had to be seen using the Transit (public transport), try local food from the various food outlets (sfeeha from Village Pitta, purple yam ice cream from Lolit's, safari grill at East African), spend time at the Forest Lawn Library, finishing the tour at the Northern Terminus, at the Baitan Nur Mosque.

Nenshi became the first Muslim (Ismaili) to become mayor of a major Canadian city. His use of social media and innovative, yet simple ways of engaging across the boundaries of culture, religion, age, geography, gender, were all viewed as a breakthrough in election campaigning. Combined with his faith and background, he made international headlines. His campaign and approach to engagement and politics in full sentences were seen as a major shift in Canadian civil politics, especially for the city of Calgary.

After being convincingly elected by 40% of the increased turnout (33% in 2007 to 53% in 2010), taking up office on 18th October 2010, Nenshi has continued to fulfill his approach to 'doing politics differently'. He has done this using a variety of modern methods to achieve 'old fashioned engagement'. Most of this engagement has been approached in a far more collaborative way. Consultation, according to Nenshi, is far too one sided and it should be about getting communities involved: collaboration. Another method working towards 'politics

in full sentences’ has included how his team and any volunteers have been reassured that ‘we are humans and humans make mistakes.’ Modern politics in many countries and contexts has replaced ideas and solutions with the assignment of a culture of blame. Nenshi did not want this for his team – the goal, therefore, was about identifying the mistake, working through the mistake and learning from it: Collective Learning.

At the time Nenshi was interviewed, he had just completed his first year as Mayor. He had had time to implement many of his better ideas and was demonstrating a far more collaborative approach to local politics – ‘I have been publicly elected. I am seen as the image of the city’.

As well as engaging with social media, Nenshi was fully aware that his campaign engaged with the youth and the various cultures across the city; this engagement needed to continue. His role meant he would need to do more and more to engage. The new Mayor wanted to continue to engage all Calgarians to take action within their communities. He wanted citizens to be involved in his vision of politics in full sentences, so he challenged a group of dedicated volunteers to encourage Calgary as a whole to start taking action. This group of volunteers soon became the Civic Engagement Committee and out of that came the initiative ‘3 Things for Calgary’.

It was an idea in itself that did not happen overnight. They wanted the initiative to be catchier and more accessible than ‘The Mayor’s Civic Engagement Committee’ to capture the imagination of Calgarians. The idea was taken out and

about around the city, so people's thoughts could be taken into consideration as how best this idea could be implemented. Whilst this was taking place, one of the volunteers made a giant green number three and persuaded his film-student son to do some filming and put together a video to capture people's imaginations. It was the catalyst that was needed to launch the campaign '3 Things for Calgary'.

Nenshi and the Committee's aim were to empower the public to suggest three things that they believed could improve Calgary – their City! The website was set up to be user friendly, fun and interactive (www.3thingsforcalgary.ca). The hope was that people would get involved, tell their friends and neighbours and then wait and see where the initiative took the city. The instructions on the website were, clear and simple:

Don't be shy or modest about sharing your 3 Things with other Calgarians. It's all about encouraging and inspiring others to take up the 3 Things challenge.

Think first about whether your Thing is for:

- Your Street - something like a front yard BBQ
- Your Neighbourhood - something like a litter cleanup day
- Your City - something like volunteering for a local not-for-profit organization

Then share Things you've already done or Things you're planning to do in the space below. And last, but not least, tell 3 people you know about 3 Things for Calgary and encourage them to get involved, too.

As Nenshi said, ‘The idea is to let people realize that they can make change then hopefully they will.’ By getting the public directly involved in personal projects, however large or small, Nenshi realized he was engaging with all generations, ethnic groups and backgrounds to take personal responsibility for ‘their’ city. Nenshi believes that the people of Calgary feel talked to and invited into the conversation – ‘The use of plain language is important to help frame choices and decisions so they [communities] are a part of it..... language and jargon can alienate people so it is important to frame choices in a thoughtful way.’

Whilst undertaking the first-hand research in Calgary, there were many opportunities to speak directly with citizens and engage in conversations with them about their Mayor. These conversations would usually begin by commenting why I was visiting Calgary - visiting the Mayor. The following are examples of the public’s responses:

‘What a nice man! Whenever we see him, he is always smiling. He is very approachable publicly’ (A retired couple Christmas shopping in the Hudson Bay department store).

‘He gets things done. He does what he says. He appears to be a really nice man’ (Asian Taxi driver who had moved to Calgary 16 years ago).

‘A man of his word. He is knowledgeable and honest in his approach’ (A local businessman waiting for his next appointment in a hotel bar).

‘I saw him at the stampede! He was just mixing in with the people, talking to everybody. He seems a really happy man who is will to listen’ (Young female part-time shop assistant also a University student).

Naheed Nenshi was voted in to undertake a second term as mayor of Calgary, still engaging with the citizens, business leaders and students. These relationships have allowed him to continue making a difference via the ‘3 Things for Calgary’, as well as new engaging initiatives. One example is working with the city’s businesses better, easier and faster by helping to ‘Cut Red Tape’ (introduced in February 2014⁴⁹). Over three phases, by January 2015, savings of C\$12.7 million had been made by cutting forty examples of red tape.

I’m just a nerdy professor! But nerdy treats people like adults as part of the future of the city – people feel talked to and invited into the conversation with the use of plain language.⁵⁰

These relationships are important in leadership to make progress and improve organizations and localities. The next case study is about the Red Arrows – the Royal Air Force Aerobatic Display Team. This case study also demonstrates the importance of building relationships from the beginning, understanding individuals to develop a common purpose, along with the honesty of making mistakes with the understanding that they can help improve an organization by learning from these mistakes.

⁴⁹ http://calgarymayor.ca/stories/tag/cut_red_tape/
C\$14,675,000 by 25 June 2015

⁵⁰ Taken from interview with Naheed Nenshi held in his office at Calgary City Hall, Calgary, Canada: 15 November 2011

THE RED ARROWS

The Royal Air Force Aerobatic Team, the Red Arrows⁵¹ demonstrate effectively how appropriate socializing, briefing and debriefing, all strengthened by the permission giving to project a voice of open and constructive dissent, are important for strong relationships and continuous learning and improvement. It is what makes them the ultimate high performing team of professionals, able to fly at speeds of around four hundred miles per hour at only six feet apart.

Spending time closely observing the Red Arrows, it is obvious how they pride themselves that when something goes wrong, they talk about it openly afterwards ensuring there are limited secrets, no hidden agendas, and no one is afraid of admitting mistakes. The attitude is that when you make a mistake you share it, learn from it, put it behind you and not do it again, all the time working in a learning culture aiming for the utopian ideal of a just culture. Part of the culture is the appreciation and understanding that although they strive for perfection in everything that they do individually and as a team, they know that they will never be perfect. Because of this realization, the collective goal for the team is simple: To give a great display in aerobatic flying. By considering the importance of relationships for the Royal Air Force Aerobatic Display Team, the link between the various stages of an individual's time in the team demonstrates empirically where the ideas for the heuristic framework I am proposing in chapter 6.

The building of the relationships starts at selection when each year three new

⁵¹ 10 face-to-face interviews (3 Red 1, 6 team members, 1 Commandant) between July 2010 and October 2011 and a full day directly observing the team in October 2001. Further opportunities to observe and spend time with the team were also completed throughout the 2010 display season.

members of a team of nine are recruited. The concept behind three, is that each member of the team completes a tour of three years each, ensuring that there is always expertise and competence within two thirds of the team, to support and mentor the three new members each year. Despite being interviewed by a panel of three (the Team Leader [Red 1], the Wing Commander RAF Air Training and the Air Commandant Central Flying School), the ultimate decision involves the entire team. The panel compiles a short-list, however each potential recruit spends a day or more with the team, getting involved with non-flying duties, informal team activities, followed by an informal evening social event involving social interaction – New Beginnings. Although flying skill is obviously of utmost importance, it is the social interaction that is also seen as crucial. The nature of the job is hard on individuals, being both mentally and physically demanding. It requires them to not just complete around one hundred air displays a year, but also to be an ambassador for the RAF, the team and themselves, and be able to talk to the public and the media all around the world. To be able to complete this role effectively, efficiently and safely, it is imperative the team gets on well. However the most important reason for the social interaction and close relationships – the focus on the ‘space in between’ (Uhl-Bien, 2012) - is the context in which they learn.

Each sortie undertaken by the Red Arrows - whether or not it is a practice sortie, part of a display, or a full display to the public - is briefed (observed for the first time in October 2001 during initial training, as three new members of the team were being trained). By this point the individuals privileged with wearing the red flying suit for the specific season have already achieved New Beginnings by

having numerous opportunities, both formally and informally, to get to know each other well, socially and professionally, understanding each other's backgrounds, characters and motivations. To move Beyond the Collective as the best aerobatic display team in the world, every briefing led by Red 1 has an element of New Beginnings about it. The briefings are used to clarify the situation they will be displaying in, any unusual circumstances, possible changes to the weather or the display, the crowd line, and so on – with Red 1 telling his *story of self* for that specific sortie. Red 1 ensures that everyone has an opportunity to have a voice by asking each member by their allocated number (two to nine) to speak in turn – the opportunity to express their thoughts and *story of self* thus Building Common Purpose for Action. Only when everybody is happy as a collective do they carry on with undertaking the display – the action. To allow all of the individuals to move Beyond the Collective requires putting in the effort to ensure that each individual feels part of the collective by having a role and individual identity within the overall collective identity, encouraging a sense of purpose, commitment and ownership.

After each sortie, there is always a debriefing with all individuals present - Collective Learning. Red 1 is called 'Boss' with every other member of the team referred to by their number - for example, Red 2, Red 4 or Red 8. It involves each stage of the sortie being critically examined, with each pilot able to dissent. This dissent takes the form of either complimenting a particular maneuver or criticizing themselves or each other, including Red 1. Red 1 at the time of my observation visit in 2001, Squadron Leader Spike Jepson, stressed that the openness and being able to be critical and honest with each other was 'crucial to learning'. Red 1

during my interviews with the team in 2010, Squadron Leader Ben Murphy, illustrated this with an example of a senior hospital consultant who attended one of the Red Arrow corporate days:

Whilst having coffee after the debriefing, a hospital consultant approached me to talk about what he had witnessed, and was shocked at how I let the team “criticize me so publicly in that way” when I am the boss! I stressed to him that I am not perfect, just like no one in the team is. Therefore it is crucial that I am also highlighted and told when I make mistakes so we can all learn from each other.

I asked Red 1 how the consultant reacted: ‘He pulled a quizzical frown, harrumphed and excused himself to fetch another coffee. I would like to think I gave him food for thought.’

As might be expected, during the debriefing session the newer, less experienced, members of the team appeared to be distinctly quieter, perhaps being slightly intimidated about speaking up and be openly critical, also potentially finding such open criticism difficult to take. This is why so much importance is directed at building close relationships: to allow the newer members to gradually feel included and more relaxed within the culture of openness. One way I observed this relationship building is done in the bar; there is plenty of banter and humor, not allowing anyone to feel they have been singled out and making light of the situations. This social time particularly appeared to help the new members of the team gain personal confidence, especially with regards to advising each other how

to deal with the public and the media.

In one-to-one conversations with various members and ex-members of the team during 2010 and 2011, terms that were commonly heard included trust, openness, common goals, camaraderie, collective decision-making, friendships, learning, high standards, interaction, and support. To make all of this possible, rank and hierarchy are negligible in the debrief session to allow for the openness, honesty and learning to continually allow the team and each individual to improve and progress. At the end of every debriefing session, as with the briefing, Red 1 wraps up by calling out each individual's number for a final word on anything that they want to raise, to ensure everyone has had an opportunity to speak. As discussed within the proposed framework in chapter 6, Collective Learning held regularly and frequently allows for continuous feedback to learn and correct errors whilst they are still fresh in everyone's minds, in turn thereby allowing for continuous improvement. In the case of the Red Arrows the continuous learning and improvement is required to ensure the team remains safe and consistent in everything they do.

The Red Arrows make time for the collective debrief and it is part of their culture, as it is with most parts of the military after an exercise or sortie. The several occasions I have observed debriefs with the Red Arrows (one in the formal setting of a briefing room at RAF Scampton in Lincolnshire, and on other occasions in more informal settings at hotels when they are out and about conducting public displays) it was clearly observed (both in 2001 and 2010/11) how the communication with openness and honesty, the camaraderie, the support and

friendships, keep the team effectively working together to achieve the agreed common goal. During training and practice sorties these can take considerable time and tend to take place in formal briefing rooms (as I observed in 2001), and are well structured. However, they can also take minutes – again, because they are well structured and part of the culture of the Red Arrows.

Using this case study of the Red Arrows practically demonstrates how this framework can provide a way to understand how organizations and teams structure and facilitate informal social interaction, learn to listen to each other, develop greater trust in each other by better understanding and empathizing with each other. Not just the leader in authority, but everyone involved needs to be recognized and identified regarding who they are, not just as a job title, to encourage relationships to be closer, more honest, responsible and open.

It is recognized that the Red Arrows are part of the Royal Air Force and therefore there is an element of a military culture embedded into each individual pilot's early training which could make this case appear too simple for the framework being proposed. Therefore to use a public sector example, I now briefly discuss how I observed something similar in action on a day-by-day, week-by-week basis in the City Mayor of Leicester's office in October 2011 during a short ethnographic study.

LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL AND THE NEW MAYOR

At the time of my Leicester City Council ethnography, Sir Peter Soulsby being the first elected City Mayor of Leicester was coming to the end of his first one hundred days. The changes had been significant from the start in terms of setting up a cabinet of six Assistant Mayors and a Deputy Mayor, and moving their offices from the historic Town Hall to the new modern council building to work closer with the senior officers and communications team.

During my first interview with Sir Peter Soulsby⁵², he went into great detail about how when he was elected into office on the Friday, by Monday he had commandeered the big meeting rooms in the council building and started to break down the geographical boundaries that had been in place. He described how this initiated the breaking down of the organizational boundaries that had historically been in place – the start of New Beginnings. Rory Palmer⁵³, the Deputy Mayor in 2011, explained during his interview how he saw this initial overnight change as partly symbolic but operationally significant to allow for stronger relationships to develop between the mayor, his cabinet and the senior officers. Each Assistant Mayor was positioned with an office in their relevant portfolio departments, close to the senior officer responsible, and in the same building as the City Mayor. Rory had observed this big symbolic change by the Mayor as helping to close the gap between the officers and the political council, despite the line still being there, and helping to operationalize political leadership. Rory described this relocation of the cabinet to the council offices as ‘absolutely pivotal’ for a more hands on council.

⁵² Interviewed at Leicester City Council Offices 11 October 2011

⁵³ Interviewed at Leicester City Council Offices 13 October 2011

To continue and demonstrate how the changes were significant, the new City Mayor and his Deputy introduced new ways of working. Both talked about how, to build and strengthen working relationships with the senior officers and the councillors and go Beyond the Collective, the newly elected City Mayor treated each day as a New Beginning, Building Common Purpose for Action, ensuring Collective Learning. To enable and maintain a strategic direction and ensure the City Mayor and all of his team were aware of what was happening around the city of Leicester, he started each day at 08:45 with a briefing style meeting, which he facilitated. Most mornings it was brief and lasted no more than fifteen minutes (this was certainly the case with the week of meetings that I observed). However, it was explained to me how, if necessary, the briefing would continue with only the relevant members with a part or role to play staying to discuss the issue, giving the other individuals an opportunity to opt in or opt out of the discussions. This meant that if individuals felt they could contribute, they were welcome to stay.

The attendees at these morning briefings were the City Mayor (facilitator), the Deputy Mayor (facilitator if the Mayor was unavailable), and all the members of the senior management team. During these briefings there was an opportunity for each individual person to raise any local or council issues (dissent), telling their own individual departmental stories to the rest of the collective. This was a time for everybody to alert the Mayor and each other of any good or bad news that was arising across the city of Leicester. Good news was acknowledged and congratulated. Any potentially bad situations were addressed collectively with any

contributions and sharing of ideas welcomed, enabling actions to be implemented or situations to be learnt from almost immediately (constructive and active dissent). During these briefings any up and coming events and media issues were also discussed along with who from the council should attend (the City Mayor personally or a member of his cabinet from a relevant portfolio), all the time ensuring everybody was engaged and part of the collective process. The briefing the following morning would include any updates from the actions implemented the day before, along with any new stories arising. In an interview with the Chief Operating Officer of the city council, he supported the morning briefings due to, ‘decisions are being made almost instantaneously’ with another of the senior officers adding, ‘dialogue is minute-by-minute with issues discussed as they develop...promoting good relationships’ – a collective identity was being clearly established.

The role of the Assistant Mayors as personal portfolio holders on the City Mayor’s cabinet was made up of elected councillors. The City Mayor chose each person for their strengths and knowledge of the portfolio assigned rather than picking political allies, wanting a strong team of professionals delivering a strong service to the city of Leicester. Due to their roles being predominantly part time, they were not part of the morning briefings, however their offices were now with the senior officers advising them on their portfolios, and in the same building as the City Mayor and the Chief Operating Officer. To further strengthen his relationships with his cabinet, the City Mayor allocated space in his diary – making time - to conduct one-to-one meetings with each Assistant Mayor, usually with the Deputy Mayor also present, to debrief any issues and discuss new ones.

As a collective, the cabinet also met up to three times a week. The City Mayor would chair these meetings, and other attendees were invited to attend as required from other council teams along with any advisors (two of these meetings were observed during my time with the council⁵⁴). Despite the role of an executive councillor becoming more time intensive than previously, the Assistant Mayors interviewed appreciated the extra time the City Mayor was allocating to them, allowing their relationships to develop. The Assistant Mayor for Children, Young People and Schools expressed how the City Mayor was, ‘steering the helm rather than commanding... Using his skills in conversation, responding appropriately and not pretending he has all the answers.’

This awareness of not holding all the answers is evident with his approach to better connect with the citizens of the city of Leicester. During his first one hundred days he held various ‘Meet-the-Mayor’ events in popular public areas such as the market place. This was intended to give the public a voice outside of a public meeting environment, allowing individuals to ask the City Mayor, usually supported by one of his Assistant Mayors, anything they wished, to get engaged and debate face-to-face. The Senior Officer for Communications sensed that Peter was willing to listen to the people: ‘He hears them and responds to them.’ By undertaking these meetings, the City Mayor is aware that people now know who he is, unlike when he was a council leader. He admitted to being recognized walking along the street or when he is in his local pub. People feel able to stop and talk to him about local issues and raise their concerns to a face and not just a name. This identity and familiarity has given the City Mayor a higher level of

⁵⁴ First meeting was 11 October at City Hall, and the second was 14 October at the City Council Offices.

accountability to get things done for the City and not just a political party.

This example demonstrates how the opportunity of being a newly elected City Mayor for the council allowed Sir Peter Soulsby to treat everything as a New Beginning, implementing a new culture in the council of working collectively and building strong relationships to be more than just a group of individuals and move Beyond the Collective. By confronting issues daily in the briefing meeting with his senior team, and weekly face-to-face meetings with his cabinet, along with ‘Meet-the-Mayor’ events with the public, it has allowed for his one hundred day plan of 100 challenges, to achieve 99 out of 100 (with the 100th being work in progress improving the bus networks around the city). As one of the Red Arrows stated, ‘we strive for perfection but we know we’ll never be perfect.’ The City Mayor does not have all the answers, but he knows that through his open relationships with his various collective teams of individuals around him, he can strive to provide most of the answers for the City of Leicester.

The remainder of this chapter will now consider why these three cases provide empirical data in the area of relational leadership and better engaging individuals to work more effectively as a collective. It will openly focus on relationships and emotions, positive deviance, the mundane difference, all culminating with the principles of just culture.

RECOGNIZING EMOTIONS.....

Emotions that catalyze action by individuals include urgency, anger, hope, solidarity and the belief that 'you can make a difference'. The barriers are when these emotions are not attended to or deemed as unimportant for action: fear, apathy, self-doubt and isolation (Ganz, 2010). Weick suggests that by reorganizing larger complex problems into smaller 'less arousing' problems, people can identify with the problem better because the problem has become more manageable, giving individuals the feeling of being able to make a difference and achieve visible results, or as Ganz (2010) would put it, instilling hope and solidarity into the collective.

Within social movements Ganz (2010) refers to urgency and anger as action facilitators. Urgency refers to priority rather than time, to create focused commitment and while 'anger' to some could imply ranting and rage, however Ganz does not use it in this sense. Anger, as an emotion for Ganz (2010: 518), is indignation with injustice, not rage. It is about creating a motivation to act to move towards what ought to be, not what it is.

The other emotions he defines are the three that have the most potential of mobilizing individuals to Build Common Purpose: Hope, Solidarity and the idea 'you can make a difference' (YCMAD). These three emotions combine the metaphor discussed by Heifetz and the small wins of Weick in building trust, courage and togetherness amongst the collective. To instill hope, requires the sharing of stories of previous credible successes and small wins to inspire others to believe in themselves and as a collective, focusing on what is possible, not what

is probable. This builds trust and confidence into the collective so they focus on what they can achieve, and that what they are doing really matters. All of these emotions can be communicated via dialogues in the form of stories to capture a collective's interest, to inspire and build on their curiosity and discover the purpose of the collective. This does not just form another team of individuals, but moves beyond this to form an engaged collective to more effectively tackle challenges.

POSITIVE DEVIANCE – ‘THE BOTTOM OF *THIS* BOX!’

This idea of looking at the bottom of *this* box, giving the problem back to the people with the problem, is related to ‘positive deviance’ (Pascale, Sternin and Sternin, 2010). In their book *The Power of Positive Deviance: How Unlikely Innovators Solve the World’s Toughest Problems*, Pascale, Sternin and Sternin (2010:3) talk about observable exceptions, explaining the importance of focusing on the successful exceptions and not the failing norm. They argue that there are many cases within a community or an organization where there is at least one innovative individual who does not necessarily know that what he or she is doing is anything unusual, therefore rendering them invisible to the rest of the collective. They are usually working with the same resources and within the same confounds of everyone else, and yet the solution/method/course of action is unique, deviating from the norm. Once discovered and understood, it can be learned and adopted by the wider group: Positive Deviance is an individual’s difference being regarded as a community resource.

Pascale, et al. (2010: 4) propose a basic premise for positive deviance based around the following three points: First, solutions to seemingly intractable problems already exist, second they have been discovered by members of the community itself, and finally these innovators - positive deviants – have succeeded even though they share the same constraints and barriers as others. Thinking inside *this* box by focusing on the positive deviants, and not solely outside or at the top of *this* box, is about seeking out the latent wisdom and solutions that are already being applied within organizations.

For an organization to transcend tough challenges and periods of change, where there appears to be no obvious solution, there is a necessary requirement for the collective to be engaged so that they can overcome resignation and fatalism. To be able to look at the bottom of *this* box, to identify the individuals who are being positively deviant, opportunities need to be created for them to self organize and tap into their own wisdom and address the problems themselves. Therefore, it is the leader with formal authority who needs to establish an open culture and build up strong relationships, and for this to happen Pascale et al (2010: 9) suggest the leader needs to ‘blend’ into the working landscape of the problem, adopting the ‘natural contours of the social topography’. The formal leader(s) need to demonstrate commitment to the process and be intertwined within it to be part of it, encouraging the collective to focus on what is works, not always what is not working.

The idea of the *story of self* and ‘the bottom of *this* box’ can be compared with Heifetz’s (1994) concept of ‘giving the problem back to the people with the problem.’ By this, Heifetz suggests that the role of leadership is more about influence and ensuring people take personal responsibility, rather than thinking they are not leaders or part of the problem, and therefore escaping responsibility. Allowing individuals to pool their resources as a collective, has the potential of giving everyone a sense of ownership of the problem or project, therefore a personal responsibility for what the outcomes may be. The formal leader, according to Heifetz, should therefore shift away from the traditional caricature of having superpowers, and use their position to form constructive relationships to allow openness for questions and knowledge sharing.

RELATIONSHIPS

On reflection of some of the discussions above and in chapters 4, especially where disengagement and the lack of social interaction or lack of emotions results in poor performance (Dekker, 2009), it seems plausible to suggest that much of it is rooted in relationships that bind individuals together and these are seldom simple and transparent. Firstly, individuals in the workplace may fail to give colleagues accurate feedback in the fear of upsetting them, so rather than airing contradictions they protect incompetence rather than confront it (Argyris 1986; Fletcher, 2012). Leaders sometimes feel uncomfortable expressing their differences with followers and other colleagues (Perlow and Williams, 2003) and this type of behavior is often linked with the belief that by avoiding confrontation, embarrassment and difficult scenarios, you are protecting and enhancing the relationship and creating a harmonious workplace, when in fact the silence is doing the opposite (Perlow and Williams, 2003). Secondly, to some people relationships are seen as trivial, mundane and ‘soft’. Remembering a member of staff’s birthday or arranging an after work social event is perceived as diverting focus from more important organizational realities (Fletcher, 2012), and is seen as costing money which is best used to focus on organizational learning and achievement.

These two problems of relationships are often part of the ‘mundane tasks’ required of leaders (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003) and followers, and misunderstanding them, or underestimating their importance, can prevent leaders from recognizing how all individuals are required to play a part in building a strong collective and *story of us* to work more effectively on the now. Strong

relationships among peers are as significant as the relationships between formal leaders, and formal leaders and individual followers. These interpersonal relationships are critical to encourage the bringing together of the small stories of self to share understandings, commitments, goals and join together for collective action.

Another problem is that not everyone likes everyone, and therefore not all relationships are equal. As Granovetter (1973: 1361) points out, the strength of an interpersonal tie is, '...a (probably linear) combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie.' He suggests that a tie can be strong, weak, or absent, with 'the more frequently persons interact with one another, the stronger their sentiments of friendship for one another are apt to be' (Homans, 1950: 133). Granovetter (1973: 1368) associates a 'friend' as a strong tie, and an 'acquaintance' as a weak tie. His work considers both levels of the individual and the community, supporting Epstein's (1969: 110-11) findings around 'effective networks' when individuals interact intensely and regularly, with the other individuals constituting the extended network. Granovetter suggests the effective network is close to strong ties between individuals and weak ties make up the extended network. It is the weak ties in organizational settings that enable information and ideas to flow more easily, giving an organization a sense of community, due to weak ties playing an important role in social cohesion (1973: 1373). Strong ties are difficult to maintain in significant numbers, therefore suggesting these are associated with close friends and family and concentrated around a particular group but both strong ties and weak ties are positive in

collective environments, and both play a part in the local phenomenon of cohesion (Davis, 1967). Absent ties are negative and show there are no 'bridges' or links between individuals; therefore there is no community or cohesion. When focusing his studies around weak ties and community organization, Granovetter (1973: 1376) considers 'the more local bridges (weak ties) in a community and the greater their degree, the more cohesive the community and the more capable of acting in concert'. Historically, weak ties were considered negative (Wirth, 1938), but Granovetter's work suggests that they are as important as strong ties and are indispensable to individuals' with regards to their opportunities and integration into the collective.

Ganz (2010) also refers to Granovetter's work, and similarly advocates that both strong ties and weak ties are required in successful social movements: strong ties to facilitate trust, encourage motivation, and build commitment, and weak ties to broaden access to salient information, skills and learning. Within a voluntary setting, such as a social movement, the possibility of strong ties is probably easier to achieve between individuals due to their closeness. Within an organization, the old cliché, 'You can choose your friends but you can't choose your family' or 'You can choose your friends but you can't choose your colleagues' (unless you are the formal boss maybe!) captures this well. In a social movement, of course, the majority of the individuals involved are volunteers and are there for a social or political purpose, with many probably knowing of each other as friends or acquaintances beforehand. In an organizational environment, an individual is being rewarded in relation to a salary or wage, and therefore for some it is seen as a necessity rather than a choice to opt in or out; for others, of course, it could be a

vocation and there is a passion for the role they are undertaking. For these reasons it is not always possible to encourage strong ties within an organization, however, if ties are absent or too weak then it is likely there will be low or even no cohesiveness, communication or collaboration and therefore no collective: no relationships. With no cohesion, there is not trust; with no communication there is silence; and with no collaboration there is little chance of making a difference or learning; and with none of these there is huge risk of a culture of resentment, blame and fear.

However, individuals forming strong ties in the workplace can be a potential problem. A Chief Inspector of Sussex Police⁵⁵, for instance, suggested that when some team's relationships become too close people begin taking advantage of these 'strong tie' friendships, especially when requesting annual leave or 'sympathy' sick days. In these situations a strong *story of self* might ensure that any 'strong tie' friendships are clearly defined within the workplace setting, with all involved understanding their organizational roles and responsibilities, and who has formal authority.

An organization of blame can damage these 'strong' and 'weak' ties, making relationships fragile, cracks appearing and therefore at risk of breaking. These cracks could be the start of poor communication, lowering of trust and therefore 'absent' ties. To overcome these cracks breaking, and therefore focus on individuals, certain industries introduced a Just Culture (Dekker, 2009).

⁵⁵ 24 September 2014

JUST CULTURE

In his book *Just Culture*, Dekker suggests that the idea of a line between intended and unintended mistakes is almost an illusion (2009: 77) because of the subjective nature of mistakes. A willful violation is clearly unacceptable and many argue that negligence is too. Negligence in the literature is when conduct falls below a required standard, when a person fails to use the reasonable level of skill that another prudent person would have done under the same circumstances (Dekker, 2009: 77). This could be linked to an individual undertaking their role with regards to a duty of care. The line between what is acceptable and unacceptable here is not black or white, but very grey (see previous chapter, fig 4.2, fig 4.3).

Dekker suggests that it is not always about where to draw the line, but who draws it. Turner (1995) does not necessarily use the term 'Just culture'; he refers to it as a 'Safety Culture', suggesting that managers should encourage an 'open learning atmosphere' to encourage the discussion of 'mistakes, errors and near-misses without fear of blame or recrimination' (Turner, 1995: 325). Turner concluded that safe practices require commitment from all involved, from the leaders and management in positions of authority through to the rest of the workforce.

When investigating mistakes to identify whether it was intended or unintended requires me to consider the idea of first story and second story accounts (listening to all involved). Organizations that are at risk of a blame culture, or even a fear culture, have a tendency to view human error as the primary cause for failure, whether it is intended or unintended by the individual or collective involved. These are so-called 'first story' accounts (Cook, Woods and Miller, 1998). The

answer, in this approach, usually involves the removal of individuals or they are made an example of through remedial training, and the rest of the organization is urged to try harder, as the blunt end apply more rules, more procedures and possibly more automation: Relationships, trust and learning are all damaged.

Because human error is inevitable, the focus should therefore, be about examining whether a deeper story might be involved, one that is embedded in the relationships of individuals working at the sharp end alongside the procedures, rules and equipment usually initiated by those at the blunt end. Second story accounts (Cook, Woods and Miller, 1998) – or in some cases third and fourth story accounts – allow the consideration of human error as the effect of systemic vulnerabilities inside the organization. Saying what an individual or collective should have done does not always explain why it made sense for them to do what they did at the time (Woods, Dekker, Cook, Johannesen and Sarter, 2010). Most of the time professionals want to undertake their role in any organization accurately, appropriately and effectively without making unsafe decisions or actions, which result in failure. The vulnerabilities that are deeper within the organizational story have potential consequences for any failure but they are often inherent in the system with professionals at the sharp end coping with these hazards not always realizing that they are actually doing so subconsciously. This routine coping is what makes up the tacit skills and knowledge many people at the sharp end learn themselves and there is a requirement to disseminate this learning to others to avoid others making mistakes that already have appropriate actions – looking at the bottom of *this* box. Involving people at the sharp end in investigation procedures is therefore essential to realize what it is really like to

undertake the front line tasks, challenges and problems.

Asking the individuals on the front line to discuss their actions and behaviours that may or may not have crossed the metaphorical line in the sand with regards to what is forgivable or not, is self-evidently difficult. But they were there and therefore know far more about what their intentions were, and the actual action taken in the given situation that was being faced. If they were part of a process or inappropriate rule, they can explain why it was not workable, available or incomplete. Yet historically organizations do not always involve the perpetrators in investigations: it is usually assumed that their perceptions are too biased and they will always put themselves in a more positive light resulting in those in formal authority seeing the individual's account as one-sided, distorted, skewed or partial (Dekker, 2009: 86). But no story of a failure or inaction, whether intended or unintended, can be told objectively because no view is neutral; all views have values, interests and stakes wrapped up into them (Dekker, 2009: 87).

Within the aviation industry, a Just Culture is defined by Eurocontrol⁵⁶ on their website⁵⁷:

A culture in which front line operators and others are not punished for actions, omissions or decisions taken by them that are commensurate with their experience and training, but where gross negligence, willful violations and destructive acts are not tolerated. There is a need to learn from accidents and incidents through safety investigation so as to take

⁵⁶ Eurocontrol is an international organization involved in almost every aspect of air traffic management across the European skies.

⁵⁷ Taken from the website <https://www.eurocontrol.int/articles/just-culture> accessed 8 July 2014.

appropriate action to prevent the repetition of such events. It is therefore important that an environment exists where occurrences are reported and where the necessary processes are in place for investigation and for the development of necessary preventative actions such as re-training, improved supervision, etc.

Just Culture is regarded as a philosophy that has been gradually introduced into the aviation and nuclear industries since the early 1980s over concerns that materialized out of a changing interpretation of accidents and failures that occurred in the late 1970s and 1980s. One of these accidents was the worst aircraft disaster in aviation history between a Pan Am Boeing 747 and a KLM Boeing 747 crashing on the runway in Tenerife in 1977. Despite the multiple causes and sequence of events leading to this devastation involving five hundred and eighty three deaths, it was recognized that one over-riding issue was the traditional hierarchical rank and role structure, that put profit and strict regulation of the airlines ahead of the most important aspect of flying – safety. It is a culture that has now become part of everyday practice for pilots, both military and civilian, with regards to openness in conversations with senior officers, and clear reporting lines for minor and serious observations that have the potential to become devastating.

In my interviews with, and observations of, Royal Air Force officers from the Red Arrows who have all flown operationally, it is apparent that a Just Culture is a philosophy that is implemented between 60-70 per cent of the time. They see it as a philosophy to aspire to, but it will never be 100 per cent perfect. Further informal discussions with commercial airline pilots said that it has made a huge

difference with regards to learning and improvement of procedures in the cockpit and the aviation world, however there is a feeling that organizationally there is still a drive to put profit ahead of safety (Fraher, 2014). With regards to a Just Culture, across the industry it was felt it is adhered to around 50-60 per cent of the time in the cockpit, but less than this with regards to the organization as a whole.

In his work, Dekker (2009) expands on what a Just Culture is and is not. It is about accountability and learning, which he suggests, in essence, is about trust and is fundamental to human relationships. It is about individuals taking personal responsibility, and holding them to account if problems occur within the organization. He clarifies that holding people to account is not about blaming them for their actions, but allowing open communication to create and gain consensus around an explanation of a failure or problem. It is about satisfying the demand for accountability and contributing to learning and improvement: 'It is a challenge which is at the heart of a Just Culture' (Dekker, 2009: 25).

Where the negative aspects of Blame Culture in organizations - lack of empowerment and inclusivity, lack of engagement and the displacement of blame - have negative effects and are damaging to people's morale, commitment, overall job satisfaction and willingness to do that little bit extra above and beyond their role (Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter and Ng, 2001) Dekker (2009: 26) argues that in the long run, a Just Culture has the potential to benefit everybody in an organization. For the regulators and senior leaders in authority at the blunt end, who run and monitor organizations, a Just Culture approach enables them to have a clearer idea of what is going on, understanding the capability of the individuals

at the sharp end doing the job so they can effectively tackle the problems that they may face. For the individuals at the sharp end, a Just Culture is not an excuse to be let off the hook for their mistakes, but a way of encouraging them to feel able to concentrate on doing a quality job, feeling empowered and involved in making a difference by contributing to the removal of any indiscrepancies or errors that may be bubbling beneath the surface. Finally, for the customers and consumers who are associated with the organization, it can provide a reassurance that the organization is focusing on improvements and not hiding or defending bad decisions.

The challenge, as one the RAF officers interviewed expressed, is that it will never be 100 per cent perfectly adhered to in any organization – it is a utopian ideal. To aim for everything to be in the open, but not tolerating every error or mistake is a tense and difficult balance and the concept of Collective Learning where organizations talk about a learning culture of improvement, is a way forward. It involves individuals taking personal responsibility and reporting the unintended mistakes that have the potential to remain latent and damage the organization if ignored. Holding people accountable - but not blaming them for unintended actions that might be partly the fault of a misapplied rule or procedure, system or lack of knowledge - is part of that journey. As Grint writes in work about ‘wicked problems and clumsy solutions’ (2005b, 2010), a Just Culture it is not necessarily *the* answer, but a step to better encourage collaboration.

The expected opposite to a blame culture might appear to be a no-blame culture. However a blame-free organization would also result in being accountability and

responsibility free. Holding individuals to account and blaming them are very different procedures. Blaming individuals, as has already been discussed, makes them less accountable because they often respond by trying to avoid personal responsibility; silencing individuals results in them not feeling appreciated or heard and therefore unwilling to participate. Blame free is not about being fault free or accountability free, and is therefore not the solution to a blame culture because learning does not occur.

SUMMARY

Using the three empirical examples from the interviews and observations, they contribute to the next chapter where the heuristic model Engaging Beyond the Collective will be now be explained in detail.

It starts by focusing on how individuals in a group context can build and benefit the collective to make a difference, therefore going beyond just the mundane tasks in hand and building engaging relationships – moving Beyond the Collective. Focusing on individuals and their values through a *story of self* during New Beginnings, and not focusing on data, politics, profit, performance targets, and production, can better enchant, engage and motivate them to encourage inclusivity and not alienation or fatalism. It has the potential to allow the individuals to stretch themselves to make a difference as a collective, but also for himself or herself to make a difference individually. By permission being given to share personal experiences and knowledge – what is at the bottom of *this* box, pooling resources and communicating ideas, helps move the individual's relationships, Building Common Purpose. And by encouraging individuals to focus at the top of the Hill of Upward Dissent, to provide facts, solutions and to be articulate about them during Collective Learning ensures mistakes are appropriately learnt from focusing on organizational improvement, not *dis*organizational failure. As Gabriel stated, 'The power of story is not just about entertainment, but seeking to educate, persuade, warn, reassure, justify, explain and console' (Gabriel, 2000: 32).

The following chapter will outline, discuss and explain what all these terms mean in detail with regards to the proposed heuristic model, attempting to address the

‘space between’ individuals and the collective highlighted by Uhl-Bien and the gap in relational leadership studies, focusing on the organizational ‘wicked’ problem of disengagement.

CHAPTER 6

FROM NEW BEGINNINGS TO COLLECTIVE LEARNING, AND THE HILL OF UPWARD DISSENT

NEW BEGINNINGS....

From an analysis of previous relational leadership theories and a consideration of how social movements and collective identity theories can help consider better motivating and engaging people, the first step in considering each new ‘wicked’ problem, difficult challenge, merger, project, team, or department appears to be a New Beginning. As Ganz, (2010: 514) acknowledges:

Relationships are beginnings not endings, they create opportunity for interests to grow, change and develop...Participants may also discover common interests of which they were unaware.

If there is an equivalent process already in place, and it is a recognized day-to-day task, then this may not be necessary. However, if the problem or project appears to take on the appearance of a social or organizational problem enmeshed within a complex system, that involves social and behavioral change, or solutions on the table have the potential of being partial, unforeseeable or have unintended consequences, then there might well be a need to consider New Beginnings (individuals), before an attempt is made to move to what I call Building Common Purpose for Action. It all begins with building blocks to promote strong relationships to ride the rollercoaster of discovering what differences are needed to make a difference.

Ganz (2014) suggests social movements and political campaigns are all new organizations, not established institutions; they have a cause, usually involving young people (Martin Luther King was only 25 during the bus boycotts), and as individuals they have a passion to make a difference, whilst collectively they are able to pool their resources to make that difference. New relationships are formed in the absence of a formal structure, which, via the voluntary commitments of people, create a formal structure. It is these relationships that set the foundations for the creation of structure, rather than the other way around as in so many formally structured hierarchical institutions. It is also during these New Beginnings of relationship building that there are opportunities for an exchange of interests – what motivates an individual – alongside the pooling of resources of what they know that may be relevant. This pooling of resources can help create a concentrated power, but this can only be achieved through learning what these resources are. Organizing people at the beginning to come together and say who they are, appears to be the foundation for creating potentially powerful relationships.

To clarify, when using the word ‘resources’ I am referring to what an individual can contribute with regards to their skills, their knowledge (tacit and explicit), and their practical wisdom; or as Aristotle stated *techné*, *epistémē* and *phronesis*. New members to a collective can bring new perspectives to possible solutions, and encourage established members to change their habits and consider the different perspectives.

From an ontological narrative perspective, the stories of an individual's life are not fixed because they are embedded within specific times, within spatial relationships that are fluid (Somers, 1994). An individual therefore experiences, observes and learns new 'resources' every day. An individual plays many characters in their lives: parent, sibling, community leader, councillor, citizen, politician, anarchist, and so on. Each of these characters provide individuals with experiences, knowledge, and skills, all of which have the potential of being transferrable into any given context. In Polanyi's (1966) notion of tacit knowing, explicit knowledge is more easily transferred and communicated in organizations as it is thought of as more transmittable through formal language and action. Tacit knowledge, however, is far more personal to an individual, embedded in their mind, and is therefore more difficult to formalize in an organizational setting and thus be communicated (Nonaka, 1994; Polanyi, 1966). Hence the explicit knowledge that can be expressed in words and numbers is only 'the top of the iceberg of the entire body of possible knowledge' (Nonaka, 1994: 16), while the narrative of the self and the purposes of self are continuously constructed and reconstructed in various contexts, intertwined with intrinsic and extrinsic relations of time and place. For a person to explain what they know, to make sense of what they know, and explain who they are, a *story of self* is required (Ganz, 2008, 2010, 2011) to communicate who they are and to characterize themselves within a collective (Brown and Duguid, 1991; Denning, 2011). The sharing of tacit knowledge, both individually and collectively, is one way to enhance the resources and effectiveness of the relationships being constructed (Blackman and Sadler-Smith, 2009).

The first step to building the relationships during the New Beginnings of a project, problem or department, is therefore to allow time for everyone involved to give their *story of self*, to say who they are and start the process of building trust (Denning, 2011) and pooling of resources (Ganz, 2014). Obviously some people have more experiences than others, some have more to say, and others do not like to expose information about themselves. However, being allowed to adapt and present a *story of self* does appear to help the collective begin successful communication. To start the conversation data does have its place, however used in isolation or in too much detail, with too much focus, it does appear to inhibit the relationship building. On the other hand, dramatizing, personalizing and socializing the data does appear to help individuals relate where the problem may lie: it has to matter to them. The concept of New Beginnings is not about telling, it is about engaging the individuals as pioneers of the collective to discover for themselves what resources they have collectively to actually *do something*.

In traditional organizations it is the responsibility of the formal leader to set an example to the individual actors and to encourage and give permission for individuals to share their stories and contribute to the New Beginnings of tackling the problem. This often begins with the formal leader taking the time to tell his/her story, which helps to lower the apprehension of the other actors involved and encourage them to divulge their stories. This is the time for the leader in formal authority to admit they do not have all the answers, to admit they are also fallible, to interpret the problem how they see it, and to demonstrate openness and honesty. Both Ganz (2010) and Denning (2011) argue that if you do not allow the formal leader, and I argue all actors involved, to author their own accounts, others

will. Others will create a potentially erroneous account of the stories, telling them out of context, and in ways that may not be appreciated by the ‘owner’ of the account. Therefore, allowing individuals to tell their own story within the right context not only inhibits the ‘wrong’ stories being narrated by others, but it also provides a first step in establishing an individual’s credibility within the context, especially if leading the project or contributing significantly to the challenge (Denning, 2011).

Exley (2008) gives an account in his observations of Barack Obama’s presidential campaign in 2008 of a young black woman who overcame adversity within a prejudiced education system to achieve her dream of working for NASA. During Camp Obama (appendix 7), Exley describes how much you can learn from a person’s *story of self* in just two minutes during a New Beginning. Exley admits his prejudices in his article about how he saw a room full of ordinary campaign volunteers, and not a group of individuals with a variety of skill levels, high intelligence, a depth of various experiences and practical wisdom. On hearing their stories – short personal accounts – he looked at them all differently, with an expanded vision of what they were capable of doing together as a collective, with pooled resources and a sense of power to make a difference.

During the conversations with subjects for this research, especially civil servants and NHS managers, and considering the three cases of *disorganization*, the frustrations of working in silos and not being able to talk cohesively across these silo boundaries or generational boundaries proved common. It takes courage and creativity for some, and is more natural for others, but it can also be a cathartic

experience (Grint and Holt, 2011) sharing thoughts, experiences and knowledge, knowing a contribution is being made. Both Alexander (2010) and Exley (2008) observed this during Camp Obama, and I have observed the same when asking people to present their work during teaching sessions in the form of an improvisation or a story. In both the Camp Obama case and in my personal observations, with confident facilitation that explains the benefits of the exercise, people usually begin to relax and contribute their stories.

The *story of self* during New Beginnings is designed to capture the way individuals can be encouraged to have a voice, to be heard by everyone involved, and to share resources to develop new ideas and release latent solutions to make a difference, therefore avoiding the negative effects of silencing of individuals. The empirical data and literature suggests a significant challenge is not always about discovering what to do, but how do you get people to participate. Organizations are good at offering training and telling people what to do, with the individuals seeing, listening and learning to return to work with nothing changing (Pascale et al, 2010: 92). By allowing individuals a voice in the beginning, organizations give them the opportunity to own the problems and opportunities being faced, understand the relevance of their role, and share the purpose. Professionals know what to do, but they do not always feel like they are able to do it because of a culture of fear, blame and resignation, as discussed in chapter 4 when discussing the empirical cases around *disorganization* and *disengagement*.

There are several factors to consider with New Beginnings. First, there is some research into silence, which assumes an individual perceives the silence as a way

of preserving and supporting relationships. However, given how people are all individuals with dissimilarities in backgrounds, personalities, experiences and temperaments, it is inevitable that few relationships – marital, professional, and personal – are able to survive the strain of these differences without some damage (Perlow and Repenning, 2009). However,

No group can be entirely harmonious. Groups require disharmony as well as harmony, dissociation as well as association; and conflicts within them are by no means altogether disruptive factors. Far from being necessarily dysfunctional, a certain degree of conflict is an essential element. (Coser, 1956: 31)

As well as disharmony, another cautious message about the *story of self* that is necessary to be highlighted is that all life experiences do not need to be told; it only requires a small sample story which is relevant to the context of the situation, beginning with a person's name, job and their interpretation of their job description, a short background if from another department or part of the organization, and a possible summary of most recent qualifications and work experiences.

Another issue is the use of humour. The use of humour in a *story of self* can give the story a higher and finer quality, sometimes revealing a proud and defiant character (Gabriel, 2000), with the listeners experiencing sympathy and pity, at the same time admiring the defiant attitude. Freud suggested that the use of humour in a story of pain replaces the emotions of anger and bitterness, maybe even despair, '....and dismisses the possibility of such expressions of emotion

with jest' (Freud, 1927: 428). Humour can therefore help people identify more with the story being told by the individual, therefore building trust and social cohesion within the collective. With humour being a shared emotion, it also has the potential of relaxing individuals within the group, continuing in helping the breaking down of boundaries, facilitating openness and communication (Basu, 1999). Encouraging people to be humorous within an organizational setting can provide a temporary smokescreen for them to express deeper feelings and views, alongside any ambiguity they may be feeling (Gabriel, Fineman and Sims, 2000). However, it does have its time and place. There are many situations where it might be wholly inappropriate, especially with regards to the use of sarcasm, teasing and 'sexual innuendo', all of which have a high risk of backfiring and potentially generating resistance, offence, inequality, division and conflict (Collinson, 2002: 282). Deal and Kennedy (2000) express the importance of humour to motivate employees, which in turn produces significant benefits, however Ackroyd and Thompson (1999) suggest it can also be used as a weapon of resistance, as a means of expressing cynicism, alienation and disenchantment. Humour is an important emotion that can reduce tension in many ways, but it is a double-edged sword that can hold multiple and ambiguous meanings with misinterpretation always being a possibility with some individuals possibly taking offence (Collinson, 2002: 272).

This phenomena of short personal stories during New Beginnings – the *story of self* - allows for the advantages of the richness of knowledge and experience – resources – already held in the hearts and minds of the individuals brought

together as a collective, to make a difference. And it costs nothing - except maybe time.

The tendency for many organizations is to look upwards or ‘outside of the box’ for answers to ‘wicked’ and challenging problems, ignoring the richness of knowledge and experience already inside the organization. This almost suggests that the organization, or people at the sharp end of the organization, do not have the appropriate skills and resources - a deficit approach. This is addressed by regularly contracting consultants to facilitate and advise leaders and their teams to think differently. An advantage of considering a problem, project or challenge as a New Beginning and giving individuals permission to divulge and pool their ‘resources’ is that the answer or solution may already be not outside *the* box but at the ‘bottom of *this* box’ thereby taking a more vertical slice of the organization to consider many voices, not just the few associated with the more traditional horizontal top slice. In sum, it is always possible that the potential of latent knowledge that exists in an organization - waiting to be discovered, voiced, interpreted and transformed (Nonaka, 1994) – has the solution to the problem within itself. To look at the organization metaphorically as a child’s toy box, the oldest, most popular, yet forgotten way of facing a particular problem could actually already be in *this* box. As old toys may be pushed to the bottom by new, more modern, toys, organizations may focus too much on using the most recent externally derived approaches to tackle problems rather than seeking the solution within. The Deputy Chief Executive⁵⁸ of Luton and Central Bedfordshire Council once explained this problem of complexity by attempting to explain the benefits

⁵⁸ Interview held at the Council offices in March 2010 for a Total Place update report for the LGA

system to me. It resulted in him using an example of layers of paint; each new process was like another layer of paint being applied to a window frame, without removing the previous layer or considering if it actually just needed ‘touching up’. The result is that there are so many layers (of paint or process) that the whole system jams because no one understands how to apply the new system, or stop referring to the old system – you cannot shut the window and no one seems to realize why. He did not have the powers to do what he wanted to do, but he knew the only answer was to strip the metaphorical paint (or process) back to nothing and start again – it required a New Beginning.

A strong practical example of how powerful this idea of looking inside *this* box – rather than looking ‘outside the box’ - is how Dame Julie Moore⁵⁹ at the University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Trust asked her staff to help her improve the hospital and work towards their collective moral value of ‘Patient Safety’. Moore admitted she would never describe herself as ‘super-human’, but she did realize that to turn her hospital around required her to challenge, be blunt and honest, and tell truth to power, ‘using the “f-word” with ministers if necessary’. Having started her NHS career as a nurse at the age of nineteen, she knew many of the answers to the hospital trust problems were already at the bottom of the hospital – at the sharp end, being unconsciously completed day to day by her professional teams of nurses, porters, cleaners and doctors. She decided to look inside the hospital and asked her staff to help turn the hospital around, with positive results making the working environment more open, honest and accountable.

⁵⁹ Talking at the HPDS conference at the College of Policing, Bramshill, 3/12/13

The case about the Mayor of Calgary discussed in chapter 5 is a positive, Political example. Naheed Nenshi, the Mayor of Calgary⁶⁰, knew some of the answers on how to make Calgary a better place to live, were to be found in the hearts and minds of the citizens who actually live and breathe Calgary; or as the strapline put it: ‘Our Calgary, Our City’. The case discusses how he asked citizens to contribute ‘3 big ideas for Calgary’. Despite thousands being submitted to his Mayoral office, and admitting during the interview that many were not feasible, hundreds of them were. Those that were not necessarily feasible still gave the Mayor and the councillors a flavour of how the citizens of Calgary were feeling, how they interpreted the city, and how they felt it could be improved as a place to live.

To summarize New Beginnings, the important aspect is making the time for individuals to express a story about themselves, ‘In a world in which members specialize in different tasks and have access to different sources of information, surfacing different people’s perspectives is central to organizational success,’ (Perlow and Repenning, 2009: 24). New Beginnings is a phrase that captures the data collated and literature studied on the importance of bringing individuals together. It embodies the process of working collectively to reach beyond the top tiers of the hierarchy and the usual suspects involved in organizational problem solving by including the whole system, and thinking inside *this* box and not just ‘outside the box’. In the next section I move into the realms of public narratives (Somers, 1994); the continuation of building a *story of us* (Ganz, 2008, 2010), fostering collaboration and sparking action (Denning, 2011) – in sum, Building

⁶⁰ Interviewed at Calgary City Hall, 15 November 2011

Common Purpose for Action.

BUILDING COMMON PURPOSE FOR ACTION

The overlap between an individual telling the *story of self* to the building of a *story of us* requires people's lives to be involved with many 'us's' (Ganz, 2010). Somers (1994: 621) argues that within narrative identity, the ontological narrative relating to the individual embeds the actor within these relationships and the stories of 'us' that start to shift in time and space. These relationships and stories are the narratives attached to the cultural and institutional formations that move beyond the single individual, towards the collective – public narrative (Somers, 1994: 619). These collective public narratives, Somers suggests, range from an individual's family, to the workplace, church, council, government or nation. Like all stories, they have an element of drama, plot, explanation, and selective criteria that makes them a collective identity. As Melucci's (1988) definition states, it is about the 'we-feeling' of common beliefs, common convictions, social ties and emotional bonds.

To begin the process of moving to the Building a Common Purpose, Ganz (2010: 525) defines his *story of us* as about helping to express the shared values and experiences that all build on the individual *story of self*. It is a continuation of the pooling of resources being evoked at that time and place as a contingent container of hopefully shared resources. Ganz (2010) also refers to it as a form of collective identity, built around a story to help define and distinguish the collective 'us' from other groups and teams, to reduce any uncertainties about what to expect as a collective and with whom interactions are taking place. He suggests that establishing a *story of us* builds on the stories of overall cultures, the challenges being faced, and explores how to stand up to these challenges. Successful stories

of 'us', in Ganz's experiences in social movements, have the potential to be told time and again, almost becoming a myth or folklore of the organization, because they are informative, well timed, entertaining, with a plot and characters, coincidental, and open to embellishment (Gabriel, 2000).

Applying the *story of us* within a practical organizational setting, Denning (2011: 151-152) highlights the importance of a narrative 'to get things done collaboratively'. In his work, Denning considers four ways human beings work together; Work Groups, Teams, Communities, and Networks. Denning defines a Work Group as a subunit within an organizational setting, usually referred to as a department or a division with individuals working towards the same subject, with defined rigid responsibilities, reporting directly to a supervisor or middle manager.

Teams differ from Work Groups by being organizational groupings comprised of interdependent individuals coming together with a common goal or a specific objective, usually decided by those in authority and established for specific projects with responsibility being ultimately shared. The authority typically selects the members, who have little choice about being in attendance and contributing, which in turn means there is a need for them to demonstrate a commitment to the job in hand. These types of teams have a tendency to be micromanaged, with the goals often not being shared by the members as individuals due to the nature of their engagement with the hierarchy.

Communities historically were referred to as geographical communities of individuals, who lived, worked and played together, however they are now not necessarily considered this way, but rather as groups of individuals who share common interests, practices and values. Denning suggests the geographical boundaries are dispersing due to technology offering email, social media and video conferencing all facilitating the rapid growth of communities on a global scale. Networks are defined as groups of individuals who stay in touch because of a mutual benefit, which may or may not be explicit.

As Denning (2011: 153) acknowledges, there is an overlap between all four collections, because an individual is likely to be a part of Work Groups and Teams within their professional lives, and Communities and Networks in their personal social lives. Behind the framework of *Beyond the Collective and Building Common Purpose*, I am suggesting that Teams as a collective, as defined by Denning, can learn from Communities which, as defined by Denning, take a similar form to social movements.

A community is a voluntary organization with the members selecting themselves, choosing to opt-in or opt-out, with the goals of the collective being decided by the members because of common interests and a passion and focus on the community. Teams are chosen and directed by the individuals in authority, with specific allocated resources. Denning (2011) suggests that communities can tend to lack leadership, however Ganz argues that although they might lack an element of formal authority, with selection being voluntary and grounded with common interest, leadership through informal authority is often present.

Pascale et al (2010) suggest that giving individuals the voluntary choice to opt-in or opt-out of a project is essential to ensure genuine commitment. Those who know they can contribute will opt-in, with those who feel they cannot contribute opting out. This choice and sense of volunteering for a project is one of the key reasons why social movements and communities can be more successful than mandatory organizational projects. Denning (2011), from studying high performance teams, suggests they resemble and take on the characteristics of communities. Senge (1990) interviewed individuals in high performing teams and noted how they talked about being part of something meaningful, something larger than themselves, connected and generative. He found that even when they had completed the task in hand they still met up to reminisce and relive the cohesiveness.

There are many competent teams (Denning, 2011), however they often lack excitement and a sense of passion and ownership that comes with a high performing collective, a social movement or a community, all with common purpose and values. All these come from commitment, especially to one another, by helping each other achieve not just the professional goals, but also the individuals' personal goals (Katzenbach and Smith, 1994). However, for a team to become a cohesive committed collective, it requires strong, affect-laden relationships woven together by shared values, norms and meanings, and above all a shared identity and common purpose (Etzioni, 1996).

It is not an easy task to create a high performing team, and it appears impossible to force the process of 'us' to Build Common Purpose for Action. While a leader

with formal authority can formalize an initial meeting they cannot force and formalize the relationships; this will only kill any passion that has the potential to bring the individuals together (Denning, 2011). It is the individuals who create their own relationships and destinies, transiting the blurred line from self to us, through common interests and shared values. The influence of others also has considerable power in applying peer pressure to bring others - who are not convinced - into line. As one nurse expressed to Dame Julie Moore⁶¹, 'It's much more fun being part of a proud team.' The role of the formal leader of the group, therefore, is as the storyteller, to be an interpreter, to author a summary of the shared experiences, and to ask questions. Building this collaborative narrative, Denning (2011) suggests, depends upon on each individual knowing each other's *stories of self*, so they all have a better mutual understanding. It is all part of stimulating and building passion, and engaging individuals to create a sense of belonging, to move beyond just a gathering of individuals, to a feeling of togetherness, so that if one person fails, it is failure to all – being Beyond the Collective.

Finn, Currie and Martin (2010) highlighted the significance of human and social relations in relation to the consistent views of teamwork as socially constructed (Findlay et al, 2000; Finn, 2008; Knights and McCabe, 2000), considering the context of teamwork through discussions around expectations and attitudes of individuals' involved (Marchington, 2000) and shared common understandings (Finn and Waring, 2006). They identified that in particular the historical working relationships, roles, skills and experience identification between individuals

⁶¹ Talking at the HPDS conference at the College of Policing, Bramshill, 3/12/13

involved are ‘significant mediators of both organizational challenges and effects of the professional institution’ and ‘where there were shared role expectations ..., coupled with strong previous working relationships, we see capacity to accommodate organizational challenges and transformation of the professional institution’ (Finn et al, 2010: 1091). Therefore tackling complex challenges requires shared understandings with strong relationships. However, it is more common that these historical relationships are not already in place and so therefore they need to be constructed appropriately, to facilitate the appropriate conditions to build an identity, shared values and common understandings to be more than just a team of individuals.

What the three cases of improved relations and engagement in chapter 5, along with the writers of high performing teams (Denning 2011; Katzenbach and Smith, 1994; Owen, 1996; Senge 1990) confirm, is how individuals see meaning when feeling part of the larger *story of us*. The New Beginnings of a challenge allow the *stories of self* to develop into the *story of us*, that bring together the common interests, shared experiences, and mutual values, which all contribute to create the potential actions that are required to tackle the challenge(s) being faced. An individual feeling they have made an active contribution and being part of the weaving process of moving Building Common Purpose, is what appears to create the basis for the strong relationships. These relationships are not only with the formal leader(s) involved, but, just as significantly, with their fellow followers.

In some of the interviews conducted and conversations had over the last three years, it is apparent that the *story of us* is as unattended to as the *story of self*.

Middle and senior managers expressing their problems around engaging individuals, people working in silos, and the need for more collaborative work is evidential in demonstrating how relationships are weak – both professionally and interpersonally. When questioned about the culture of the organization, and how social people are outside of work hours, there was very little to support the interpersonal relationships of a collective. Despite people working side-by-side, day-to-day, few would linger after work to be social, few would arrive early, rarely taking lunch breaks together out of the office, or going for a coffee or a meal after work. Many reported sitting at their desk to eat lunch, and some had long commutes and responsibilities at home, making it difficult to be sociable after work. However, Ganz (2010) argues that if individuals are motivated and engaged, feeling part of a collective with meaning, and they feel that they can make a difference, informal gatherings both inside and outside of working hours are what establish and confirm relationships built around an ‘us’. He continues to stress that without these informal and formal interactions, there is little opportunity to build on the choices made to face the complex challenges, and learn from them afterwards. A lack of interaction in a collective can put them at risk of not achieving creativity. In contrast, being part of these informal and formal interactions provides opportunities for all individuals involved to motivate, inspire and build each other’s emotions to Build Common Purpose for Action and move Beyond the Collective.

Ganz (2010: 526) talks about moving from the *story of us* into the *story of now* by sharing stories of small successes where others have made a difference in other movements, organizations, or situations – sharing emotions. Similarly, Weick

suggests that applying a strategy of small wins can have a powerful impact on doubters (Weick, 1984), by demonstrating visible and tangible outcomes of a modest size, so that learning does not tend to raise many new questions but reaffirms an issue as within an attainable intellectual grasp, thus creating hope for action (Weick, 2001).

Many of these ‘small wins’ stories take the form of ‘small stories’ (Clifton, 2014). These small stories can tap into an individual’s experiences as a way of making sense of the world around them (Georgakopoulou, 2006), and how they can contribute to the world so the collective can better understand them and understand how they interpret the world. The interactional feature of small stories as talk-in-interaction, a discursive approach, is the basis of ensuring that the telling of *stories of self* merge into the *story of us*, remembering the past, focusing constructively on the now, and imagining the future (Clifton, 2014; Fairhurst, 2007). In short, the individuals do not relate and then communicate, they relate in and through the conversation (Bateson, 1972).

The combination of incorporating small wins, according to Weick, (1984: 44), gives the people involved in the project or challenge an opportunity to contribute to visible successes, in turn building confidence by translating their engagement, excitement and rising optimism into immediately identifiable actions. Goodman and Leyden (1991) illustrate this when they considered the relationships of a crew of coal miners with results indicating lower levels of productivity when the group was less familiar with each other. Other evidence in this area (Guzzo and Dickson, 1996) indicates that when individuals in a group are more familiar with each

other, they carry out their work with far greater effectiveness than those who are strangers or with absent ties (Swan, Scarbrough and Newell, 2010).

The concept of building a *story of self* into a *story of us*, permits a culture of ‘surfacing different people’s perspectives’ (Perlow and Repenning, 2009: 24) by ensuring they have a voice through relationships (especially in encouraging ‘weak ties’), is imperative in providing information to facilitate learning and for organizations to adapt and articulate the urgent challenge being faced and focus on what Ganz’s interprets as the *story of now* (2010: 526). Without involving all the voices and producing Meluuci’s (1988) ‘we-feeling’ that embodies a credible vision of how to act in a meaningfully specific way not an abstract way, there cannot be a *story of us* or *now*, encouraging all individuals to feel engaged and included and providing a vision that carries hope.

To summarize so far, allowing individuals an opportunity to uncover resources, share knowledge and confront barriers that more often than not remain invisible and unnoticed, appears key to reducing silence and blame. Therefore, any actions and decisions taken by a collective working together require constructive opportunities to be discussed and understood: why they worked or did not work, would it work again, how can lessons be learned, how can the organization or collective improve and move forward, and – how can new knowledge be shared and the organization given an opportunity to learn? This now builds into the third part of my proposed framework: Collective Learning.

COLLECTIVE LEARNING

One way that people learn is by doing things for themselves, discussing them amongst themselves and being given permission to share their learning of mistakes and successes (Allnut, 1982; Bosk, 2003; Dekker, 2008; Reason, 2008; Woods et al, 2010). Within any collective both the leaders and the followers are required to be part of a bigger learning strategy which satisfies a demand for developing individuals in their roles and relationships, and challenging the norms. This is the function of the third and final process of the framework: as part of the process of the new project, the challenge, working on wicked problems for example, an effective, inclusive, open and honest debrief is mandatory for learning and improvement to move forward into the future.

In the social movement literature Ganz (2011: 288) uses the word ‘celebrations’ to capture part of this process. He stresses that he is not referring to a celebratory party as such, but an opportunity for the ‘us’ to come together and recognize who the ‘us’ are, what they have achieved as a ‘we’, and where ‘they’ are going in the future. He compares his definition of ‘celebration’ to gatherings that allow the ‘us’ to join in enacting a vision of ‘us’, for example, religious mass ceremonies, university graduation ceremonies and school award days. The purpose and advantages of these types of ‘celebrations’ is that it enables ‘us’ to interpret important events, recognize the collective as well as individual contributions, acknowledge a common identity, and therefore deepen the overall sense of community. Moments of celebration help establish the collective norms, create and consolidate expectations, and influence the future development of ‘us’.

This idea of ‘celebration’ was observed during an observational visit to Orkney NHS Trust in Kirkwall, Scotland. On the evening of Friday, 31st October 2014, the Chief Executive Cathie Cowan and the Chairperson of the Board (who was unfortunately unwell and unable to attend) organized an evening for the nominees and winners of the Trust’s Annual Employee Awards Gala Dinner in Kirkwall Community Hall. There were ninety employees of the trust who were part of the three-course dinner, wine and celebration of employee achievements during 2014. There were nine categories including ‘Best Light Bulb Moment’, ‘Best Team’ and ‘Outstanding Employee’. Each nominee had their picture projected on a large screen, with the winner receiving an engraved glass trophy acknowledging their achievement, presented by the Chief Executive. The evening involved all departments, including the hospital kitchen staff preparing and cooking the meal, administrators and other hospital support staff serving the food and clearing the tables, and a room decorated with balloons and flowers. The room was filled with laughter, banter and a continuous buzz, cementing the collective identity of Orkney NHS Trust with the Chief Executive actively demonstrating her appreciation of her team, for their dedication and support. Chatting to the winner of ‘Outstanding Employee’, he explained how he had worked across England and Scotland for several NHS Trusts and Boards; he had never experienced such a motivating, well-organized and inspiring event. The Chief Executive commented that it was the third year she had hosted the event and was always humbled by the commitment and enthusiasm the staff put into it.

Despite the discussed and observed advantages of a gathering to engage in a ‘celebration’, what Ganz (2011) does not discuss in detail is the advantage of a

collective getting together to allow openness and an opportunity for individuals to discuss why something was a success, alongside openness and honesty about something that went wrong. There is little mention of taking advantage of gathering individuals involved after a project, merger, challenge or wicked problem to learn, share knowledge and improve for a better future, not just a stronger community. Denning (2011) writes about how stories are useful in transmitting knowledge and understanding what has gone on and discusses how ‘abstract understanding’, such as theories, principles and processes for repetitive tasks, and ‘tacit understanding’ which is acquired through experience – similar to riding a bike - are sometimes difficult to articulate explicitly (2011: 181).

Knowledge-sharing stories that everyone can learn from occur everyday, and involve lesson learning not just for the collective but also for the individual. Sharing stories of experience allows new thoughts and ideas to evolve to build new approaches in considering how to tackle challenges potentially being faced in the future (Denning, 2011). When individuals share stories, the details include actual personal experiences alongside embellishments and slight exaggerations; as Aristotle noted, ‘.... We all tend to embellish a story, in the belief that we are pleasing our listener’ (Poetics, 1460a). Gabriel (2000) suggests that elaborations and embellishments are used in stories to ‘emphasize its heroic quality’ (47), with ‘each recounting of a story being more embellished and ornamented’ (98).

Sharing a story of knowledge and experience aids in creating social bonds, helping to make sense of experiences and meanings, including both emotional and motivational aspects (Gould, 2004). But the sharing of a story of knowledge for a

collective to learn is not just about learning but also about strengthening relationships. If the stories are only shared by a select few of the group in more informal settings, for example over a coffee during a break or in the bar over a glass of wine, the learning is limited to only those who were present. This puts the story holding the valuable learning information at risk of being mis-told, misunderstood and misinterpreted by others. These negative misinterpreted stories put the storyteller, who should be concerned with the experience not just the facts (Gabriel, 2000), at risk of being challenged on the facts, of not engaging with its actual meaning (Reason and Hawkins, 1988). The sense-making role of stories in learning and the concept of the Collective Learning is important to move what individual's share from their past experiences during New Beginnings, to make sense of what has happened, and learn for the future via a constructive debrief, allowing candor between all involved.

The importance of Collective Learning is important because the world is not based around perfect rationality (Dekker, 2011b) – a world of clear questions and clear answers, where everything is known – but is based around contextual rationality – a world of vague questions, muddy answers and negotiated agreements that attempt to reduce confusion (Weick, 2001: 108). If these confusions are not brought to the surface of a collective, and there is no constructive dissent to allow for candor or learning for the future, mistakes will happen again.

Taking these views on celebrations, sharing knowledge, and learning from stories into account it is clear that learning collectively is an important part of this

proposed framework. If learning is not completed appropriately with all individuals involved there is the potential for any project challenges being ignored or ‘swept under the carpet’. Any exclusion in this part of the process can cause animosity, and in the worst case potential sabotage in the future. For a Collective Learning to be effective, there needs to be an element of common understanding, common language and common definitions used by those in formal authority positions to ensure all individuals are comfortable to talk about what went wrong in an honest manner, understanding that human error is inevitable, and no one individual is one hundred percent perfect. This evidence suggests that this should become an essential part of any process of tackling tough challenges to lessen the risks of silence or blame developing further into endemic cultures of blame, disengagement, and in the worst cases fear.

If the idea behind Collective Learning is to move an organization from silencing its employees in communicating issues and unintended mistakes, to developing a learning culture for improvements and working towards a utopian ideal of a Just Culture discussed in chapter 5.

‘THE HILL OF UPWARD DISSENT’ – THE NEED TO BE CONSTRUCTIVE, NOT DESTRUCTIVE

The common thread that is continually weaving back and forth through the proposed framework in this chapter and holding the heuristic together is, ironically, not consent (how leaders secure compliance from followers) but dissent – albeit constructive dissent, that is, dissent intended to facilitate the achievement of a collective goal. Constructive dissent continually allows the building of relationships and facilitates all three stages of the framework to ensure continuous recognition of pooled resources, more creative approaches to challenges, and continuous improvement and learning. It encourages candor, conflict and debate which are too often conspicuously invisible during times of complex decision making, with the individuals in authority frequently feeling uncomfortable with dissent (Roberto, 2013).

Dissent has long been recognized as an important part of leader-follower relations in allowing corrective feedback from all involved to monitor unethical or immoral behaviors, recognize impractical and ineffective policies and practices, and challenge poor or unfavorable decisions (Redding, 1985). It has been seen as a favourable concept to avoid the damaging hidden costs of silencing, some of which have already been highlighted, including losing time in decision-making, reduced quality in decision-making because of ineffective communication, decreased job motivation, time and cost lost resolving conflict issues, and in extreme cases harassment or bullying (Eilerman, 2006). Typically conflict is interpreted as negative, but it might be more useful; it is neither good nor bad but inevitable and critical to learning in organizations. If managed badly conflict can

be extremely damaging, however, if handled effectively it can bring people together (Eilerman, 2006). The voicing of dissent, then, is a method for helping individuals understand each other, the processes, the organization, and to explore actions and outcomes, whilst being respectful and empathetic.

Despite the advantages and positive aspects of dissent, it can also be damaging if used inappropriately and not understood. Constant ‘inappropriate’ dissent has the potential of leading a collective or an organization towards anarchy – but the question is who defines this? Dissent can be intentionally disruptive and for dissent to be useful - in the building of a Just Culture for example - it needs to be constructive, with individuals encouraged to explain why they disagree, possibly along with potential solutions. Discussions built around constructive dissent should be open and honest, intentionally avoiding the ‘nodding heads’ who constantly say yes to everything the boss says while avoiding the toxicity of blame cultures and bullying. Jack Welch, the former Chief Executive of GE, found that on his appointment everyone spoke to him politely, avoiding controversy. He called it ‘Superficial congeniality... pleasant on the surface, with distrust and savagery rolling beneath’ (quoted in Roberto, 2013: 4).

Another way of understanding the effective and ineffective uses of dissent is to consider the work by Kassing (1997, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2005), Redding (1985) and Roberto (2013) in the area of Communication Studies. Kassing (1997) considers the meaning of the word ‘dissent’ deriving from the Latin word *dissentire*, with *dis* meaning apart and *sentire* meaning feeling. Its translation references the experience of ‘feeling apart’. Within the context of an organization,

dissent thus relates to an individual feeling apart from the organization. However, the word dissent in the dictionary is explained with the use of synonyms like disagree, dispute, conflict, and nonconcur, giving the word 'dissent' a negative connotation. Kassing (1998: 312) suggests that demonstrating that the root of the word actually means 'feeling apart', transcends the negative concept of conflict and tends rather to suggest a duty to consider different strategies for individuals to express dissent.

Redding (1985: 245-246) reflects on the requirement for individuals to 'fit in' to organizations and 'internalize the corporate goals and values' and not 'rock the boat'. For this reason people traditionally accept the status quo and are careful to be diplomatic and 'not make waves' or 'rock the boat'. Redding points out that typically organizations are bureaucratic hierarchies, with a history of management by fear (Ewing, 1977: 21) due to the Taylorist (1911) assumption that 'management knows best'.

Redding (1985: 246) admits in his paper that he only discusses two of many ways an employee can express dissent, but a boat rocker and a whistleblower are probably the two extremes. He suggests a boat rocker expresses dissent in a straight forward manner within the boundaries of the organization, whilst a whistle blower is expressing dissent as a much stronger form, almost as a 'vigorous protest against intolerable evils' usually to voice their protest outside the organization. The big difference between the two extremes, Redding suggests, is that boat rockers should ideally occur frequently in most organizations, with whistle blowing being very rare and only as a last resort.

Almost thirty years on since Redding's work, dissent, is still frequently discouraged in organizations (Schumann, 2011) because it represents a challenge to leader and management decisions, processes, and policies, therefore encouraging silencing people and disengaging them from the organization.

Kassing (1997) and his model of Employee Dissent, considered how an individual dissents in a variety of ways. He outlined Articulating, Antagonizing and Displacing dissent and stressed how employee dissent is always present within organizations and it is never completely absent. For this reason employees adopt specific methods to express dissent that create a perception that dissent is actually relatively absent (1997: 312), almost muted when conducted through various channels so the organization cannot hear the contradictions and opinions. Kassing considered the theory of unobtrusive control (Tompkins and Cheney, 1985), the theory of independent-mindedness (Gorden and Infante, 1987; Infante and Gorden, 1987), and the Exit-Voice-Loyalty (EVL) model (Hirschman, 1970) to provide a framework for his model of Employee Dissent. By combining these three theories, Kassing identified the importance of increased face-to-face interaction and common appreciations of values and objectives (Tompkins and Chencey, 1985); how individuals desire opportunities to share their opinions about organizational situations even if they are contradictory or challenging (Gorden and Infante, 1987); and, how individuals react in different ways in response to organizational dissatisfaction, either by leaving (exit), speaking up (voice), with loyalty being the moderating variable that influences the behavior of either staying with a voice, or leaving – the more loyal, the more likely they are to stay and engage in voice (Hirschman, 1970). Another factor that Kassing

considered was the revision to Hirschman's EVL model by Farrell (1983) and Farrell and Rusbult (1992), who expanded the model to include neglect - EVLN. Farrell argued that the responses of dissatisfied employees were not only an indicator of potential organizational failure but also of neglect, entailing lateness, sickness and increased errors. Farrell and Rusbult (1992) also suggested employee responses to dissatisfaction could be compared to two primary dimensions: constructive/destructive and activity/passivity. Voice and loyalty were classified as constructive, exit and neglect as destructive, exit and voice as active, and loyalty and neglect as passive. Therefore to confront dissatisfaction, voice – dissent – is a constructive and active response.

These models outline the influence of emotions, and the assumptions of how an organization will respond to dissent, affecting whether an individual will dissent or remain silent, with the Employee Dissent Model by Kassing (1997) contributing to communication studies. It demonstrates the various influences that encourage an individual to dissent.

Articulated dissent in Kassing's Employee Dissent Model (1997) occurs within the context of an individual who dissents from an audience with a sense that they can influence the organization, and it is constructively articulated so therefore it should not lead to resistance or retaliation. Kassing summarizes articulated dissent as, 'dissent that involves expressing dissent directly and openly to management, superiors, and corporate officers' (1997: 326).

Individuals who demonstrate more confrontational and antagonistic dissent are

deemed to be primarily dissenting for personal-advantage or gain (Kassing, 1997: 326). These dissenters usually have some safeguard against retaliation therefore having some organizational influence that provides the perceived immunity. However, they are antagonistic because of the nature of the dissent being directed at a captive or influential audience, too freely challenging and confronting the organization for personal priority rather than organizational improvement. Against the primary dimensions proposed by Farrell and Rusbult (1992), antagonistic dissent is described as destructive-active dissent, or as Grint (2005: 35) defines such individuals - ‘irresponsible followers’:

.....whose advice to their leader is often limited to Destructive Consent: they know their leader is wrong but there are all kinds of reasons not to say as much, hence they consent to the destruction of their own leader and possibly their own organization too.

Finally, Kassing’s (1997) model refers to a third method - displaced dissent - that entails a disagreement without the risks of confrontation or challenge, due to the audience being external (family and non work friends) or ineffectual and internal to the organization, usually in concert with other displaced dissenters engaging just in gripe or bitch sessions (Kassing, 1997: 327). These forms of dissent are perceived as safer because the risk of retaliation is considerably reduced as part of a larger collective. Considering Hirschman’s Exit-Voice-Loyalty model expanded by Farrell (1983) to include neglect – EVLN – displaced dissent is similar to exit and neglect. The neglect is due to the individuals not addressing dissent via the appropriate audiences to initiate improvement or learning, and exit represents a psychological exit with the expressing of opinion outside the organizational

boundaries. Or to consider it against the primary dimensions of Farrell and Rusbult (1992), it is destructive and passive.

In his later work, Kassing (2002, 2005) identified deeper strategies that influence the methods used by individuals for upward communication, appreciating that this form of dissent often goes unheard. The five he discusses are direct-factual appeal, solution presentation, repetition, circumvention and threatening resignation. They are all strategies that build further and contribute to the understanding of his earlier work of articulated, antagonistic and displaced. He suggests that to be heard, further methods are considered by dissenters to ensure their thoughts are expressed.

The first two are methods demonstrating constructive and active tendencies, with the following two becoming more destructive and active with passive traits, and the final upward strategy being destructive and active. Direct-factual appeal involves providing evidence to support the dissent, orientating evidence to be constructive rather than directing blame. Solution presentation entails offering potential solutions as part of dissent, possibly alongside supporting evidence, thereby creating opportunities for all to work collectively and recognize all individuals' knowledge and contributions. Repetition is starting to slide towards being destructive, with individuals beginning to realize that the upward dissent is required to be repeated so that they are heard. It involves continuous effort to express discontent, and is often experienced as frustration with the unresponsiveness of the superordinates. The next phase from here is circumvention. This involves an individual's dissent being expressed to someone

far higher in command than an immediate person in a supervisory role.

Finally, if the dissenter is still being ignored and shunned, Kassing highlights the fifth stage as threatening resignation. This would be a last resort to prompt action from those in formal authority to listen, usually with the negative consequences of having to follow up the threat, or becoming psychologically excluded – resulting in silence. Obviously, the preferred methods are to remain constructive and provide factual information and present creative solutions within an open culture where individuals feel listened to and appreciated, however if they are not, they potentially become so destructive and fatalistic that they cannot do anything to help implement change or improvement.

Kassing (1997: 329) appreciates the complex nature of dissent and stresses that his model is a heuristic to help better understand the phenomena involved. Dissent can be uncomfortable for some individuals who do not enjoy speaking openly (Roberto, 2013) and this discomfort requires action on the part of the formal leader in the room to ensure they promote constructive dissent (Schumann, 2011). In establishing a supportive atmosphere, dissent is required to be encouraged as constructive and active, allowing all involved an opportunity to reflect on the truth of the situation. Ignoring situations, problems, and the challenges raised by dissenters, or misrepresenting them or intimidating them, is often a cause of failure (Bennis, 2004).

For a formal or an informal leader, part of the challenge to ensure constructive dissent is to create an environment of psychological safety. Encouraging

individuals to take personal risks in speaking up, sharing information, admitting mistakes to allow for learning and improvement, request help, and bring more ‘taboo’ subjects to the table involves these leaders leading by example. In short, they need to admit fallibility and understand that they are part of a synopticon (Mathieson, 1997) in which leaders cast a long shadow that is generated by the few but watched, interpreted and mimicked by the many.

Figure 6.1 below - the Hill of Upward Dissent - captures these various forms of organizational dissent – as a model for understanding the role of dissent. The model demonstrates the different aspects of candor for effective learning and improvements being at the ‘top of the hill’, with individuals in positions of authority working to encourage these constructive/active attitudes of dissent amongst the collective. What successful leaders seem to avoid is allowing the members of the collective, and organization as a whole, to ‘slip down the hill’ becoming antagonistic, silenced, resisting and resigning from their responsibilities. It shows clearly that successful dissent requires articulated, ‘factual solutions’, not repeated, antagonistic, destructive dissent, or silence.

The Hill of Upward Dissent

(Farrell and Rusbult, 1992; Gordon, 1988; Grint, 2005; Hirschman, 1970; Holt, 2015; Kassing, 1997, 2002; Perrow, 2003)

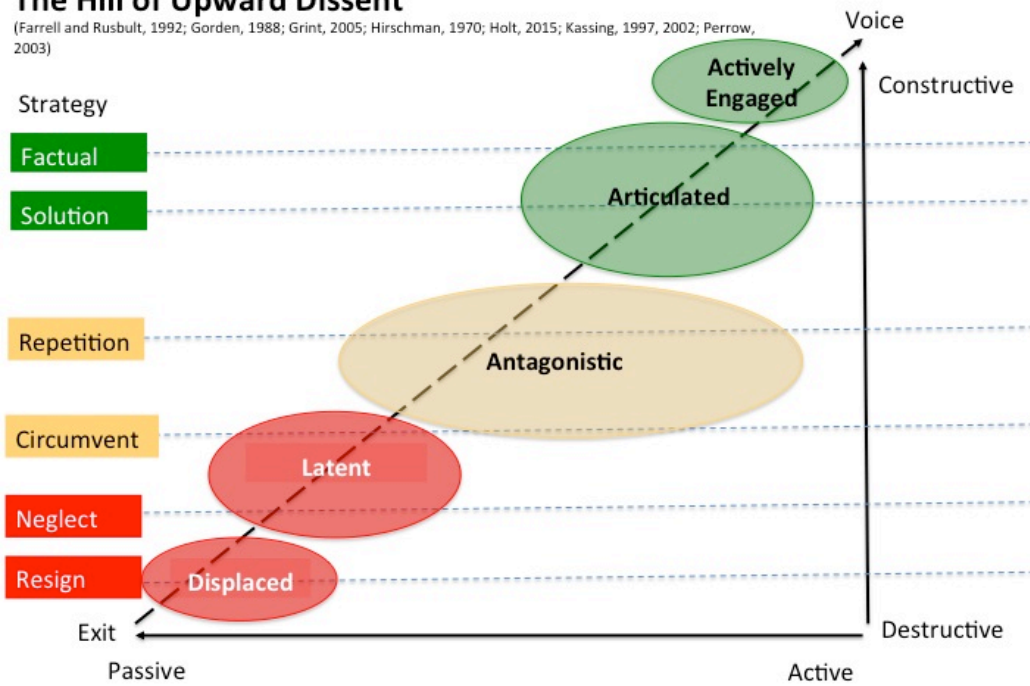


Figure 6.1 – The Hill of Upward Dissent

SUMMARY

Referring back to chapter 5, the three empirical examples from the interviews and observations have aided the construction of this heuristic model in explaining how initially focusing on the individuals can help build and therefore benefit the collective to make a difference, going beyond just the mundane tasks in hand and building relationships – moving Beyond the Collective. Focusing on individuals and their values through a *story of self* during New Beginnings, and not focusing on data, profit, performance targets, and production, can better enchant, engage and motivate them to encourage inclusivity and not alienation or fatalism. It allows the individuals to stretch themselves to make a difference as a collective, but also for himself or herself to make a difference individually. By permission being given to share personal experiences and knowledge – what is at the bottom of *this* box, pooling resources and communicating ideas, helps move the individual's relationships, Building Common Purpose. And by encouraging individuals to focus at the top of the Hill of Upward Dissent, to provide facts, solutions and to be articulate about them during a Collective Debrief ensures mistakes are appropriately learnt from focusing on organizational improvement, not *disorganizational* failure, similar to the cases demonstrated in chapter 4. As Gabriel stated, 'The power of story is not just about entertainment, but seeking to educate, persuade, warn, reassure, justify, explain and console' (Gabriel, 2000: 32).

CHAPTER 7 - CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS

Relationships are harder now because conversations become emails and text messages, arguments become phone calls, and feelings become subliminal messages online. (Anon)

INTRODUCTION

Leader and follower relationships are regularly at the heart of leadership theory and practice (Fletcher, 2012), however it is now becoming more apparent within the literature that relationality has moved beyond the entity perspective of the position of a leader (or follower); leadership is a construct of an individual in a particular context, regardless of position or role. It is through human and social phenomena that relationships are facilitated and these effects require more ‘detailed examination’ (Finn et al. 2010: 1091).

A ‘wicked’ problem associated with relationships is that human beings are not capable of perfect rationality (Dekker, 2011b) nor are they 100 per cent perfect, with the best individuals occasionally making the worst mistakes (Reason, 2008: 37). Therefore it is recognized that individuals in positions of authority require relationships with their organizational collectives (teams, partnerships, committees, boards, and so on) to be able to combine resources (Ganz, 2009), engage and empower other individuals (Bryman, 1996) and ensure an open environment for loyal, active, constructive dissent (Farrell and Rusbult, 1992; Grint, 2005a; Kassing, 1997, 2002), to ensure learning (Dekker, 2008), adaptability and innovation (Heifetz, 1994; Senge, 1990). Scholars have started

the work into defining leadership as a relationship and its occurrence in context, influenced by the interactions between individuals (for example, Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995; Pearce and Conger, 2003; Uhl-Bien, 2006), with the ‘space between’ (Uhl-Bien, 2012: xiv) being how you get the relationship. What this piece of work has attempted to begin to highlight is building on ‘this space between’ and provide a more ‘detailed explanation’ (Finn et al., 2010: 1091), focusing on the research question: How can the complex, iterative processes of relationships help re-engage individual actors in a collective to tackle challenges?

CONCLUSION

The unusual nature of the research data beginning in the area of local government for the University of Warwick Commission Report, initially focusing on city leadership and community engagement, allowed the research to focus on the identified ‘hunches’ with regards to political engagement. Adopting these ‘hunches’ ensured my role as principal researcher for the Warwick Commission was distanced from my personal contribution to academia.

Whilst writing and constructing various drafts of this work, an attempt was made to demonstrate the linear story, to demonstrate the application of the Grounded Theory Method, rather than just write about it as a methodology. The original structure was initially proposed to take the reader through each chronological stage of the research; from the beginning as the principal researcher for the University of Warwick Commission Report (induction), to recognizing specific individual actions and opinions - ‘hunches’ - that certain subjects appeared to be undertaking to tackle the ‘wicked’ problem of engagement and relational leadership issues. However, this draft structure proved unsuccessful. Therefore, the way the project iteratively moved between theory and evidence (abduction) has now been written in a more traditional structure, with Figures 3.1 attempting to demonstrate how the research developed and evolved over the course of time.

In summary, the initial findings – ‘hunches’ - being considered alongside the information accrued researching for the literature review covering a summary of leadership and followership in more general terms, and considering social movement theory, allowed the presentation of a framework outlining my

contribution to academia attempting to build ‘on the space between’ (Uhl-Bien, 2012: xiv).

The issue of engagement was also becoming more apparent when reading the political science literature on political engagement, whilst in parallel analyzing the initial interview data. It was identified that the terms ‘participation’ and ‘engagement’ were being used interchangeably as alternative expressions for one another; however they are different and each needed to be distinguished. Dahlgren (2009: 80) differentiated between the two by considering engagement as a subjective state, being mobilized, with focused attention on something; and participation presumes some degree of engagement. He therefore views engagement as a criterion for participation. For an individual to feel empowered, and part of something to participate in, there must be a connection to the practical – they need to feel engaged. Without engagement and these relationships, people will not necessarily participate, especially not fully.

With the issue of political disengagement being the starting point for the initial concept for this research, the initial question considered was as follows: how can we explain how some forms of leadership appear to better engage people and build relationships, while other forms of leadership do not? This developed as further research was conducted to ask the overarching research question: how do the complex, iterative processes of relationships re-engage individual actors in a collective to tackle challenges?

The initial ‘hunch’ around the issue of engagement was influenced by much of the literature focusing on *why* people are disengaged with (political) leaders (Dahlgren, 2009; Martin, 2012; Stoker, 2006; Whiteley, 2012), and not *how* leadership can re-engage and mobilize individuals to *want* to become part of something and make that difference.

As was discussed in the introduction, the events of the Scottish Referendum resulting in a turnout of 84.59 per cent⁶² on 18th September 2014 had not been witnessed at polling stations in a British election since 1950 when there was a turnout of 83.9 per cent⁶³. More recently elections in Scotland had only achieved 50.4 per cent for Scottish Parliament and across the United Kingdom only 60 per cent for the most recent general election in 2010⁶⁴. Political writers were intrigued as to what was so different about this electoral campaign and how it achieved such high levels of engagement and participation? One political blogger (Sargeson, 2014)⁶⁵ identified three main reasons why he thought engagement was so high and how it was achieved. First, the referendum was about Scottish citizens having the power to influence; second, there were risky consequences with regards to the future of a nation and its politics; finally, there was a high cost of not being part of the vote. What these differences demonstrated was a nation feeling empowered and experiencing inclusivity with a personal responsibility to change *their* futures – a common purpose.

⁶² BBC News – ‘Scottish Independence Referendum – Results’ – 18 September 2014, accessed 22 October 2014.

⁶³ www.telegraph.co.uk ‘Voter turnout for Scottish Referendum could be highest of any British election’ by Simon Johnson – 18 September 2014, accessed 22 October 2014.

⁶⁴ www.telegraph.co.uk ‘Voter turnout for Scottish Referendum could be highest of any British election’ by Simon Johnson – 18 September 2014, accessed 22 October 2014.

⁶⁵ Alex Sargeson, www.bbench.co.uk, ‘Unlike the Scottish Referendum, the 2015 UK General Election will fall victim to voter apathy’, 22 September 2014, accessed 23 October 2014.

Despite the turnouts in Scotland going beyond any expectations, the initial research for the Warwick Commission was supporting previous research into political engagement, with most political leaders generally failing to engage their electorates – with some clearly more successful. Was the same pattern visible in organizational leadership? To answer this question, further organizational research was undertaken.

Reflecting on a recent Gallup report *State of the Global Workplace Report* (2013), it highlighted the costs of active disengagement (similar to ‘indifference’ and ‘distrust’ in the politics literature) in organizations to be in the region of £52 billion and £70 billion per year in the United Kingdom, with only 13 per cent of the world’s working population actively engaged. This report dramatically demonstrated that disengagement does not appear to be just an issue within politics, but across most organizations - and at a colossal cost.

The further research, observations and conversations conducted revealed that without engagement it was increasingly difficult to forge relationships and effectively tackle workplace ‘wicked’ problems, partnership challenges and cross silo working in a variety of contexts. The professionals indicated they knew what to do, but the data and literature suggests that they often felt unable to speak up, therefore silenced. Some of the blockages discussed included blame and fear of being made an example of, preventing them from being able to do what they knew needed doing.

To effectively analyze the data, considering leadership as a subjective, complex and ever-changing phenomenon (Bryman, 2011; Conger, 1989, 1998; Hunt, 1991), required a qualitative strategic approach to ensure a theoretically inductive and epistemologically interpretive stance was taken. This approach was deemed especially appropriate to understand the deliberation of the leaders' and followers' social constructions of their social worlds with regards to engagement and relationships, and to examine how they constructed meanings through personal interactions. This iterative-inductive strategy, building on 'hunches' identified in the data took the format of a Grounded Theory method (Bryant, 2002, 2007; Charmaz, 2006, 2012; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Remenyi, 2013; Strauss and Corbin, 1990, 1997).

The particular adapted version of Grounded Theory used was the constructionist approach (Charmaz, 2012). It allowed a constant back and forth reviewing of the data, identifying four specific positive cases where elements of engagement had been achieved (two mayors from Canada, one from New Zealand and one in England). From the constant reviewing of these cases, it was identified how they had made creative efforts to listen to and empower the citizens. *How* these particular city leaders engaged and improved relations with their citizens appeared to involve the power of mobilization through common purpose, emotion, and collective identity, which replicates the requirements for mobilization discussed in the social movement literature (for example, Ganz, 2009, 2010; Gould, 1995, 2004; Melucci, 1988; Opp, 2009).

The literature review conducted involved reviewing leadership and followership exploring some of the theories depicting leadership as being embodied by a successful individual, and critiquing them against leadership theories that consider it as a process. It progressed to explore Relational Leadership Theory (RLT) (Uhl-Bien, 2006) and expand on why relationships are important in organizations, building into a discussion about how social movements mobilize and engage their members around a collective identity, examining the work by Melucci (1988). Part of this second literature review also considered the organizational tensions within relationships when things are going wrong, or have gone wrong and individuals are at risk of being blamed. This discussion helped in setting the stage for a better understanding of the importance of strong relationships, reviewing work by Dekker (2008, 2011b), and why organizations are at risk of a ‘Drift into Failure’. It progressed into an analysis of the work by Ganz around his personal experiences working with social movements and political campaigns, and how stories helped to engage and mobilize volunteers.

From the analysis of Ganz, additional research, the three case studies of *disorganization*, and the three case studies demonstrating engagement, a three-stage framework – Beyond the Collective - was considered to help explore and explain how some leaders, practicing some forms of leadership, are able to engage people where others fail: New Beginnings, Building Common Purpose for Action and Collective Learning. The three case studies where poor engagement and damaged relationships were evident, were used to demonstrate how the negative issues of silence, blame and poor relationships were affecting the issue of engagement. The first was a top ten multinational organization – BP Plc.; another

was a middle-sized county council – Northtown County Council; and finally the thoughts and experiences of an executive from a small private blue-chip engineering company – Aviation Solutions Limited.

What the various actors involved in these cases, and the various conversations conducted as part of the research expressed, was they were often disenchanted, disengaged, and demotivated. What was not always recognized was that this was damaging the organization causing it to become a *disorganization*, with individuals being fearful of speaking up. The *disengaged* actors in the three cases effectively demonstrated how individuals across these organizations have been struggling to make progress in challenging situations because of weak relationships, widespread confusion and quick fixes not providing any of the answers to the organizations' problems. It all resulted in employees experiencing being silenced and part of a fear of being blamed.

Learning from all these cases, the three-stage framework was discussed, outlining how some organizations (public or private) within the context of challenge, change or new projects, can potentially better engage individuals more successfully. It is a heuristic to encourage a team or group to eventually be more than just a group of individuals, and move Beyond the Collective.

The importance of dissent – constructive and active - is the thread that continually weaves back and forth through the proposed framework, holding the relationships together is. By allowing constructive dissent to continually be part of building relationships and facilitate all three stages of the framework, ensures continuous

recognition of pooled resources and looking at the bottom of *this* box, being more creative towards challenges, and allowing constructive continuous improvement and learning. It encourages candor, conflict and debate which are too often conspicuously invisible during times of complex decision making, with the individuals in authority frequently feeling uncomfortable with dissent (Roberto, 2013).

By considering some aspects of the dissent literature from communication studies (Farrell and Rusbult, 1992; Kassing, 1997, 2000, 2005), the ‘Hill of Upward Dissent’ demonstrates how dissent can be intentionally disruptive (bottom of the hill), but how dissent can also be useful (top of the hill) - in the building of a Just Culture for example. The requirement to move Beyond the Collective is for it to be constructive, allowing individuals to feel encouraged to be open and honest about why they disagree, and contribute potential solutions. Constructive dissent intentionally attempts to avoid the ‘nodding heads’ in agreement with what the boss says while avoiding the toxicity of blame cultures and bullying.

The importance of constructive and active dissent – being at the top of the hill - was a strong focus during the first stage - New Beginnings. Focusing on individuals and their values through a *story of self*, and not purely focusing on data, profit, performance targets, and production, can better enchant, engage and motivate them, to encourage inclusivity and not alienation or fatalism. By allowing the individuals involved within the collective to stretch himself or herself, and to begin to make a difference as an ‘us’, also allows for himself or herself to make a difference individually, enhancing the sense of belonging.

Constructive dissent, focusing at the top of the Hill of Upward Dissent, gives permission to all individuals involved to share personal experiences and knowledge – what is at the bottom of *this* box, pooling resources and communicating ideas – to help move the individual's relationships Beyond the Collective.

To encourage candor, openness and ultimately active constructive dissent, the power of storytelling can play a significant part. Using some of the work by Ganz, especially the *stories of self, us and now*, contributes to individuals being involved in forming the relationships and ultimately the collective. *Stories of self* during New Beginnings help with individuals build a personal identity, clarifying their role, responsibilities, knowledge, experiences and interpretation of the challenge being faced – ultimately ensuring a feeling of involvement, ultimately encouraging engagement and beginning the relationships with a culture of openness. The story is therefore connecting the individual to the collective by showing feelings, ambition, disappointments, motivations and expectations (Boje and Denning, 1993: 156).

Once all the individuals' voices have been heard, they begin to develop a collective identity, moving from just being a group of individuals to being a collective who together can go above and beyond to tackle the challenge using the power of all their resources, knowledge and skills in the room – Building Common Purpose for Action. The building of individual identities to construct a collective identity through building relationships has the potential to ensure all are engaged and mobilized to focus on the relevant actions required to make a

difference, with common values and a common purpose. Collectively, stories connect symbolism, cultures and the shared purpose (Boje and Denning, 1993: 156).

On completion of the action, the encouragement of the third stage - Collective Learning - reaffirms the collective, by allowing time to celebrate (Ganz, 2010) and learn from successes, and communicate lessons learned openly so everyone involved can learn and improve. It also allows time to focus on what may have gone wrong – what were the causalities and sequence of events that were behind the failure. By focusing on events and not just the individuals involved helps with reducing blame and encourages a focus on being open and just, with individuals taking personal responsibility to ensure the organization learns and improves.

By sharing stories of knowledge (Denning, 2011), identity and personal experiences can help create stronger social bonds, helping individuals make sense of experiences and meanings, including both emotional and motivational aspects (Gould, 2004), learning, and overall strengthening relationships. In complex ‘wicked’ contexts it is increasingly hard to collectively construct reality, because individuals often see things differently in a world of vague questions, muddy answers and negotiated agreements (Weick, 2001: 108).

Before discussing the limitations to this work, the three cases studies in chapter 5 demonstrate where the three elements of the framework have been empirically observed and appear to make a difference; the ‘nerdy’ professor who engages with his citizens to make a difference; the Royal Air Force Aerobatic Display Team, the Red Arrows, where a strong collective identity is demonstrated, showing how

they are more than just a group of individuals, and how they learn from mistakes openly and collectively as part of their culture; and, Leicester City Council who adapted to work more effectively with a directly elected mayor and new local government model, working as a collective during a challenging time of fast and dramatic change.

These cases demonstrate how individuals in high performing teams (Denning 2011, Katzenbach and Smith, 1994, Owen, 1996, Senge 1990) see a common purpose when they feel part of a larger *story of us*. Time given to the New Beginnings of a challenge allow the *stories of self* to develop into the deeper *story of us*, therefore bringing together common interests, shared experiences, and mutual values, all of which play a part in contributing to create the potential actions that are required to tackle the challenge(s) being faced. An individual feeling included, making active contributions with a voice that is being heard, to Build Common Purpose and Collectively Learn and improve for the future, all helps with the relationships of not only the formal leader(s) involved, but, just as significantly, with their fellow followers.

These three cases demonstrate various elements of the heuristic in practice and reflect what Ganz (2010) refers to as heart, head and hand to mobilize individuals to be motivated to work together, devise a strategy and take action. Within this work, I propose to move into an organizational context by considering an individual's need for passion and purpose to participate. The first two stages of the framework focus on the complex weaving of organizational relationships, to understand who a person is and what makes them passionate, why, for what

purpose, and how they intend to contribute and participate as a collective ‘us’ to make a difference via the building of Common Purpose.

The final stage of the proposed framework – ‘Collective Learning’ – continues on from the first two stages as long as they are given the time, and the people are given the respect, to establish who they are to contribute to the collective – in other words, the time to build relationships. If the first two stages are ignored, and the focus is always on the *now*, the poor relationships seem at risk of encouraging disruptive working environments, with poor communication channels, no trust, and a pathological culture of blame (Westrum, 1991).

It is recognized that this is a heuristic and is therefore not a prescription for perfect leadership, followership and relationships. However, by demonstrating how it may work in practice by discussing the three empirical cases shows it provides an understanding rather than an explanation. It pragmatically provides a ‘stepping stone’ (Popper, 1963: 331-332) allowing the data and theory to entwine and allow a framework to develop to be understandable in the social contexts studied, helping individuals to consider working differently (Locke, 2001) – providing what is referred to in grounded theory as ‘fit’ and ‘grab’ (Remenyi, 2013). Or as Charmaz (2012) refers to it, ensuring the theory emerging from the data is credible (the theory links to the data and the analysis), original (provides new insights to challenges), has resonance (makes sense to people to apply to situations), and usefulness (offers interpretations for people to use in the social world) – therefore a theory as a tool for thinking (Mouzelis, 1995).

Despite the framework Beyond the Collective meeting the idea of ‘fit’ and ‘grab’ associated with grounded theory, there are obvious limitations with the nature of the research conducted, the limits of using the work by Ganz, and the proposed framework itself. I am now going to highlight some of these limitations.

LIMITATIONS

The first very obvious limitation is the subject of leadership itself. The question ‘what is leadership?’ may have been written about extensively over the last three thousand years, and never in more detail than in the last one hundred years, however academics and scholars of leadership are still unable to reach a consensus on a basic definition and meaning (Grint, 2010). What I have attempted to do is provide an overview of the various meanings that have been communicated within the subject over more recent times, reflecting on some historical interpretations, eventually focusing on how I understand the meaning of leadership – a process involving everyone. As Nye (2008: 3) suggests ‘Leadership is ubiquitous, and leaders are all around us’. It is a process of social interactions, and more about getting people to *want* to do things through influence, rather than about making people do things, ensuring they should always comply by whatever means. The next limitation is also linked to this issue of ‘what is leadership’ and is in relation to the Western culture that it is being defined within.

The research and work conducted is primarily directed at Western organizations and not organizations in the Middle or Far East. The Middle East, for example, is an increasingly important destination for regional and global businesses due to its advantageous geographical location, and improving infrastructure. However, business relationships and working in the Middle East is often challenging. In May 2014, Badr Jafar⁶⁶ a social entrepreneur and Managing Director of the Crescent Group, spoke at the Middle East Leadership Research Centre launch

⁶⁶ <http://www.jbs.cam.ac.uk/media/2014/how-to-avoid-the-common-mistakes-when-doing-business-in-the-middle-east/> accessed 3 December 2014.

event at the American University of Sharjah, expressing common mistakes that were made when working with organizations in the Middle East. One important point that was highlighted was the importance of the relationship-based culture in the Middle East, particularly across Arab countries. It is apparently not uncommon for personal friendships and business relationships to overlap so it is therefore important to understand and appreciate this when working with people in an organizational context. There could be potential for further research across other cultures, observing how leaders in the Middle East, and maybe Russia and the Far East, work across their organizations and if these relationships are consistent within the organizational boundaries and not purely business-to-business. Or is the perceived tendency to be dictatorial in positions of leadership nearer to the truth? To have been able to visit these countries, as well as the Western countries visited for the Warwick Commission, all costs money and time. This leads me to my next limitation around the confines of the data.

Despite a budget being made available by the University of Warwick to conduct the research for the Commission, this was limited and confined to the data for the Commission report itself. The additional research, interviews and observations were conducted on a far more limited budget and were therefore entwined with grasping opportunities to conduct follow-up interviews with people after meeting them at leadership workshops, conferences and meetings. Time itself was also limited due to there being a set time frame to conduct the research and complete this contribution to academia. Therefore, despite the empirical base being restricted to a set number of interviews, workshops and conferences, I have

attempted to overcome this by looking at a variety of organizations of differing sizes and therefore cultures to collate a richer mix of data.

To collect and analyze the data, there were limitations to the research strategy, design, tools and methodology used. The research strategy used took on a qualitative approach, historically viewed during the positivist paradigm as impressionistic, anecdotal and biased (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Bryman and Bell, 2011). These opinions could be regarded as a perceived limitation due to myself being the researcher, involved in the interview process, asking the questions and observing through my own lens, therefore not separating myself completely from the facts. If a quantitative strategy had been used, a more scientific logic could have been applied, providing statistical variables, therefore allegedly separating facts from subjective values. Despite this, a qualitative strategy was used due to the subjective nature of leadership and relationships. It was deemed to provide a more open and flexible manner in reviewing context and subjects personal experiences, especially with regards to approaching it from an unstructured interview perspective, allowing a personal story to be told – the subject's personal interpretation.

Returning to the confines of the empirical data and the limited number of subjects, a mass survey would have been able to target a far larger number. However, there are cost implications linked to this, along with academic opinion. It is suggested that despite a questionnaire aiding in the documentation of an individual's perception, used in isolation it potentially lacks an effectiveness in identifying contexts that are linked to the individual's experiences and perceptions, only

focusing on a single layer of analysis also overlooking interactions between individuals (Yukl, 1994). Another issue identified by Conger (1998) is that surveys capture a static moment in time, and detach the researcher from the phenomena and events that are or have taken place. For the purpose of this research, despite the limitations of a purely qualitative strategy, a qualitative approach allowed a more flexible and interpretive way to attempt to provide a possible solution to the research question being asked.

The methodology used – Grounded Theory – also has its criticisms and limitations. As was discussed in Section 2, work by Thomas and James (2006: 768) split these into three main themes covering how grounded theory oversimplifies complex meanings and interrelationships in data, how it constrains analysis, putting procedure before interpretation, and how it is dependent upon inappropriate models of induction resulting in inappropriate claims to explanation and prediction. Despite these confines in using grounded theory, its interpretive-iterative nature allowed me to open the data up, it helped with better identifying interrelationships, and it reduced the risk of missing or over-simplifying the more complex meanings. By taking a more abductive approach to the data, due to grounded theory becoming more abductive over the decades (Reichert, 2007), gave me the opportunity to follow a reasoning process to establish the best explanations. Despite some viewing abduction as an informed guess (Remenyi, 2013), or ‘serendipity’ (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), it takes a similar stance to Popper when he suggested that science must begin with myths, with repeated observations to test ‘hunches’, all by a method of trial and error. Or as Peirce and

the Pragmatists (1839-1914) viewed abduction, it was ‘guessing... the only way of discovering new knowledge.’

For the foundation of my framework I analyzed the writing and practical experiences of Ganz and his work around public narrative incorporating the stories of self, us, now and celebration. The first and main point to highlight is that Ganz’s work is based around his practical experiences working within social movements. This therefore immediately raises the limitation of the differences between social movements and organizations. Social movements have a clear beginning and are not formally hierarchical or institutionalized. They are constructed of volunteers with no ‘formal’ leaders, with relationships built around a common purpose and a calling to make a difference. Organizations are constructed around formal hierarchies with formal leaders, more refined rules, regulations and processes. Relationships are therefore more formal and complex due to who is responsible for what and who is deemed to have the power to coerce others to comply. By taking the principles of Ganz’s public narrative of telling stories, I have attempted to take these limitations into account and develop them appropriately into an adaptable heuristic that can be applied practically across a variety of organizations.

It could be argued that another limitation is the lack of reference and research associated with gender and how the framework could be affected by males or females in positions of formal authority regarding engaging and building relationships (Bolden et al., 2011). Stereotypically, women are understood to prefer to accomplish tasks through strong relationships. However, work

conducted in 1996 by Lipman-Blumen in the US showed the contrary, with women appearing to treat relationships as less important than charisma or task orientation, compared to their male counterparts. Her research also showed males to be more collaborative and more likely to encourage and support accomplishments amongst their staff – perform the mundane tasks to strengthen relationships (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003b). Lipman-Blumen (1996: 319) suggested that this pattern of women going against their stereotypical images is that the more senior the female, the more effort is made to avoid being perceived as a traditional female, with males potentially finding it less threatening to commandeer a more relational approach because they are protected by a higher gender status. Historically, this opinion goes back to the 1970s within the field of ‘Women in Management’ with a clear response from researchers suggesting that women entering into management, entering a male world, should adapt culturally and practically (Bolden, et al., 2011). This was supported by Judi Marshall in 1984, in that workplaces were designed, structured and controlled by men, for men, with women reporting feeling they should adopt a more aggressive or dominating nature. More psychological and trait approaches suggest that female characteristics involve being able to express feelings and emotions, being more intuitive, better at relationships, and being more empathetic and collaborative (Bolden, et al., 2011), contradicting Lipman-Blumen’s findings. This contradiction according to some theorists is that gender is constructed and performed (for example Butler, 1990), with both males and females demonstrating all traits at various times as required dependent on ethnicity, religion, country, culture, education, context, organizational setting, amongst other factors (Carli and Eagly, 2011). An area for further research around this subject of gender,

relationships, engagement and the proposed heuristic would be able to observe if there are any gender differences in applying the approach, or if the traits displayed are context, organizationally or culturally biased. An overall conclusion of reviewing the research into gender and leadership shows neither gender has a necessarily obvious advantage in personality (Carli and Eagly, 2011) or general intelligence (Halpern and LaMay, 2000) over the other.

A final limitation – and an important message associated with engaging and forging relationships in any context – is that people are complex and therefore it is not possible to engage everyone, like everyone or keep everyone happy. In some situations individuals may verge on being fatalistic, psychologically withdrawing from the organization (Collinson, 2008). Individuals become fatalistic because they may not feel part of the group and they therefore feel isolated and undermined by the power of the rules of the organization and the roles of others (Grint, 2010), or they may be overwhelmed by the challenge that is facing them. Another reason could be associated with the individual in authority (leader) not being qualified or having the appropriate experience for the role, and a particular individual (follower) may become fatalistic because they feel they are more qualified – the leader is not an equal (Chaleff, 2003: 28). Despite the reasons behind an individual becoming fatalistic, it is a challenge for the others in the group. Spontaneous acts of destructive dissent, passivity, rebellion, resistance or being antagonistic can all affect the other members and it can be toxic and cause others to become disengaged. As a limitation, some fatalists will always be a ‘wicked’ problem – negative and destructive – and therefore the least worst solution may be to remove them from the group, but not before they have been

allowed to express why they feel disengaged. Allowing a fatalistic individual an opportunity to have a voice and express their discontent, and communicate what would motivate them to become involved and engaged, is a starting point to rebuilding relationships. As already expressed, people are complex and not everyone will want to be engaged. The goal, however, is to encourage the fatalist to consider their internal abilities to contribute by giving them permission to be active in voice, encouraging personal responsibility to influence the group and leaders constructively, not passively or antagonistically – ensuring they climb to the top of the Hill of Upward Dissent and not feel left behind at the bottom.

FUTURE RESEARCH

The next step is to apply the heuristic framework at the start of an identified project within an organizational setting. There is the potential of continuing with Northtown County Council, and the Board of NHS England that is facing a particular challenge around cross-silo working. The role as researcher would involve outlining the framework and its potential benefits, to facilitate and observe meetings, capturing the interactions and potential improvements of working together by starting at the beginning and not directly on the now.

Certain aspects of the framework have already been trialed by asking delegates at leadership development workshops to spend the first five minutes in their groups introducing themselves sharing information on where they work, and a brief description of their roles and responsibilities – a New Beginning. An initial observation from this is that it relaxes people in their groups, and also with me as the facilitator (I also introduce myself), which in turn encourages richer conversations during group work, more questions are asked, and therefore the more engaged people appear to be. Why? Relationships are starting to develop.

A FEW FINAL WORDS....

Søren Kirkegaard⁶⁷ famously said ‘Life can only be understood backwards, but must be lived forwards.’ For organizations to move away from the issues that influence and damage engagement and relationships, the individuals in positions of formal authority have a responsibility to involve all individuals within the collective. By doing this everyone can begin to understand who they are, and what they know, and how they can contribute by understanding more about their past experiences. Once this has been initiated, the appropriate actions can be applied to the challenge of the *now* to effectively move the organization forward, constantly learning from the past to improve the future.

It could be said that in amongst the mêlée of performance, profit, politics and production in most organizations, the most important ‘p’ is being forgotten – people: People are what make all these other ‘p’s’ happen. To ensure people are listened to and are able to be engaged and contribute effectively during challenging times, openness is necessary. To blend together and improve engagement and relationships between all individuals involved in moving Beyond the Collective – formal leader or informal leader, follower or observer – openness through constructive dissent is the thread that holds it all together. Cut this thread and there is a risk of relationships unraveling and the collective coming apart.

⁶⁷ http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Søren_Kierkegaard

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

Stories have played a big part in my life with two from my childhood distinctly making an impression: The Elves and the Shoemaker, and the Old Lady Who Lived in a Vinegar Bottle.

The first story by the Brothers Grimm about the Elves and the Shoemaker, influenced me not just because of the beautiful drawings of shoes fuelling my shoe addiction (!), but more importantly the underlying morals of the story; helping those who are less able than, or as fortunate as, you are. If you do the right thing, people will do the right thing by you.

The second story about the Old Lady who lived in a Vinegar Bottle is probably more linked to the influence of the person who was telling me the story. To this day I don't really remember much about the plot or moral lessons of the story, but I do remember it being told with so much commitment, enthusiasm, and drama by a dear old Great Aunt. Every time I saw my Great Aunt I would run over, sit in front of her chair on the floor and insist she tell me the story – again and again. Looking back, she must have found it tedious to keep telling me the same story, but as her audience, I would like to think that my engagement, enthusiasm, interest and laughter meant that she also enjoyed telling the story. Despite not remembering what I learnt from the story itself, I do know that I learnt a huge amount from how it was told – sincerity, enthusiasm, performance and creativity. The quality of a story lies in its delivery as much as in its plot: 'Stories are told. They are not a disembodied string of words, images, and phrases. They are not messages, sound bites, or brands. Storytelling is fundamentally relational' (Ganz,

2010: 522). And therefore ‘Stories connect us with one another’ (Boje and Denning, 1993: 156).

Little did I know that over 35 years later I would be writing about stories? The drama, creativity, values, memories, influence and of course lessons all play a part in connecting people of any age – whether they are a fictional character, a real character or the storyteller themselves.

The story of my PhD could almost be written as a fairytale with regards to arguably being in the right place at the right time. ‘Once upon time’ I was an air traffic controller at a medium-sized airport thinking I was set in a career for life. An incident happened where I found I was partly being blamed for something where there were many systemic factors and a sequence of events with a number of causalities, not just my decisions. After the incident, I found I had lost my confidence; I couldn’t take personal responsibility for my decisions with any conviction anymore. I made some difficult decisions and decided to leave. The problem was what to do for the rest of my working life?

Via a friend of a friend, I heard the University of Warwick was looking for administrators. I applied for a six-month maternity cover job to ensure I had an income. I saw it as a ‘holding pattern’ whilst I decided what I actually wanted to do for my next career. It was whilst undertaking this role that other opportunities kept arising. One particular opportunity was to get involved with a piece of evaluation research for the High Potential Development Scheme for the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) (now the College of Policing). I was the

researcher for this particular piece of research, and I interviewed around twenty-five police officers on the first cohort of the programme at the end of their second year of their diploma. From this experience, I particularly enjoyed conducting the research, analyzing the interview transcripts and reading around the subject of leadership development to contribute to the literature review. I was involved in the writing up and the publishing of the report for the NPIA and felt a strong sense of achievement from it. This is where I then had a conversation with Professor Keith Grint about where I could go with this in terms of a future career. He suggested a PhD! I had no other plans, and with his help and advice I applied. The one issue I had was financing it – this is where my story takes the form of a fairy tale.....!

I could say my ‘Fairy Godmother’ waved her magic wand, but that would be exaggerating. In fact, it involved several small miracles including being accepted onto the Doctoral Programme just as the Vice-Chancellor was looking for a board of commissioners consisting of senior academics to research and write the Third Warwick Commission report on Elected Mayors and City Leadership. Keith Grint was asked if he would be interested as the Director of the report and part of his role involved recruiting a PhD student to help conduct the research, with the opportunity of funding. Having just been accepted to undertake the programme and having already worked with Keith, he asked me if I would be interested. I obviously said yes! And most of the rest of this story is in this thesis.

However, there are some other lessons learned and experiences along the way that have shaped this piece of work, before I can even consider a ‘happy ever after.’

There were times of excitement and opportunity, including travelling 360 degrees around the world, and being invited to a drinks reception at number 10 Downing Street. There were also times of frustration and a lacking in confidence where friends, family and especially my supervisor were there to encourage me, with some ensuring I enjoyed a glass or three of Rioja to relax and take my mind off things occasionally. In the last six months I also discovered a new group of friends and a new way to focus my mind and relax, helping me build in confidence and realize I can achieve whatever I set my mind too.

In August 2014 I discovered Bikram Yoga and very quickly felt the benefits of it helping me to focus my mind and in turn overcome times of struggle to complete my thesis. As part of the experience I took part in a thirty-day challenge with around twenty-five other fellow yogis. This challenge reflected my framework of moving Beyond a Collective. During the New Beginnings of meeting my fellow yogis, we all began to share personal stories of self: times of struggle, loss, divorce and break-ups, challenge, stress, sadness, loneliness, weight loss, and the list goes on. These early relationships begun to strengthen during the time of the thirty-day challenge, supporting each other, motivating each other and overall moving beyond just being a group of yogis arriving for a class and leaving at the end. We became a collective of individuals who were building relationships, realizing we shared personal emotions, morals and experiences: ‘....sharing experiences, counseling each other, comforting each other, and inspiring each other into action’ (Ganz, 2010: 522). We would arrive early before a class to catch up on how we all were feeling, and stay afterwards to talk about the challenges of the class – we were Building Common Purpose.

On completion of the challenge, the yoga instructor organized a party to celebrate what each individual person had achieved, allowing everyone to contribute a story of their journey. Part of the celebration was to present everyone with a t-shirt printed with the yoga studio logo and the comment, ‘You can’t buy this t-shirt. You have to sweat for it.’ This celebration took the format of an informal style of Collective Learning.

The quote printed on the t-shirt reminds me of what a good friend said to me during one of the more difficult times when I was struggling in the early days to write and focus my research: ‘They don’t hand PhDs out on a plate; if they did, everybody would have one. It’s not easy, that’s why you have to work hard for it.’ The whole experience has been challenging yet exciting, emotional yet rewarding. It is another story to add to my experiences of life and I don’t see it as an ending with a happy ever after: It is a New Beginning to start another ‘once upon a time’ and use this work and the experiences and knowledge that I have gained to move forward and make a difference.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – SAMPLE LETTER TO MAYORS OUTSIDE OF THE UK



16 August 2011

Mayor Celia Wade-Brown

By email: mayor@wcc.govt.nz

Dear Mayor Wade-Brown

Warwick Commission on Directly Elected Mayors

I am writing to you to ask for your assistance in a research programme concerned with directly elected mayors. I have been appointed by the University of Warwick as Director of a research programme in support of the **Warwick Commission on Directly Elected Mayors**.

On completion, the report will provide evidence for the national referendum on Directed Elected Mayors, to be held in England in May 2012. The option of directly elected mayors has been available since the Local Government Act 2000, and eleven mayors were elected between May and October 2002, of which London is the only major city. However, the forthcoming referendum is an attempt to expand this provision to other major English cities (for example Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool).

To this end I or my colleague (Clare Holt) would like to come and talk to you about your recent experiences with regards to Wellington. We will be in New Zealand 6-9 November, with the hope that you can allow approximately an hour of your time for our meeting. If you could email Clare (c.holt.leadership@gmail.com) with your availability, we will do our best to fit in around your diary commitments.

We recognize this is a significant imposition on your busy schedule but, given the importance of the topic and your valuable knowledge in the field in Wellington, we really need your help! We will, of course, provide you with a copy of the interview notes to verify before we use them and can assure anonymity if that is required. We will also provide you with a copy of the final report in February 2012.

I have enclosed a summary of our aims for the research but if you have any further questions about the process or purpose of the research I would be very pleased to answer them, either by email: keith.grint@wbs.ac.uk or by phone: 00 44 (0)2476 150472.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Grint', on a light-colored background.

Keith Grint
Professor of Public Leadership

Enc

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Warwick Business School, University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL, UK
www.wbs.ac.uk

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APPENDIX 2 – SAMPLE LETTER TO ELECTED MAYORS IN ENGLAND



21 September 2011

Mayor Ray Mallon
By email: ray_mallon@middlesborough.gov.uk

Dear Mayor Mallon

Warwick Commission on Directly Elected Mayors

I am writing to you to ask for your assistance in a research programme concerned with directly elected mayors. I have been appointed by the University of Warwick as Director of a research programme in support of the **Warwick Commission on Directly Elected Mayors**.

On completion, the report will provide evidence for the national referendum on Directed Elected Mayors, to be held in England in May 2012. Since the Local Government Act 2000 made this option available, you are one of only eleven mayors to be elected between May and October 2002. However, the forthcoming referendum is an attempt to expand this provision to other major English cities.

To this end I or my colleague (Clare Holt) would like to come and talk to you about your recent experiences with regards to Middlesborough. We hope that you can allow approximately an hour of your time for our meeting. If you could please email Clare (c.holt.leadership@gmail.com) with your availability during the following weeks; 17-21 October, 17-18 or 21-25 November, 5-9 December - we will do our best to fit in around your diary commitments but we are both also undertaking research in Canada, NZ and Australia.

We recognize this is a significant imposition on your busy schedule with relatively short notice, but, given the importance of the topic and your valuable knowledge in the field in Middlesborough, we really need your help! Your leadership experiences and stories will help us write a thorough and comprehensive report to help shape the mayoral leadership model across other English towns and cities. We will, of course, provide you with a copy of the interview notes to verify before we use them and can assure anonymity if that is required. We will also provide you with a copy of the final report in February 2012.

I have enclosed a summary of our aims for the research but if you have any further questions about the process or purpose of the research I would be very pleased to answer them, either by email: keith.grint@wbs.ac.uk or by phone (0)2476 150472.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KS', with a small flourish at the end.

Keith Grint
Professor of Public Leadership
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APPENDIX 3 – SAMPLE LETTER TO COUNCIL LEADERS



25 October 2011

Councillor Richard Leese
Leader of Manchester City Council
By email

Dear Councillor Leese

Warwick Commission on Directly Elected Mayors

I am writing to you to ask for your assistance in a research programme concerned with directly elected mayors. I have been appointed by the University of Warwick as Director of a research programme in support of the *Warwick Commission on Directly Elected Mayors*.

On completion, the report will provide evidence for the national referendum on Directed Elected Mayors, to be held in England in May 2012. Since the Local Government Act 2000 made this option available, only eleven mayors were elected between May and October 2002. However, the forthcoming referendum is an attempt to expand this provision to other major English cities, of which Manchester is one.

To this end I or my colleague (Clare Holt) would like to come and talk to you about your thoughts, opinions and observations on directly elected mayors, along with why it is the right/wrong time for Manchester. We hope that you can allow approximately an hour of your time for our meeting. If you could please email Clare (c.holt.leadership@gmail.com) with your availability during the following weeks; 8-9 December, 9-13 January, 16-20 January, 6-10 February (except Wednesdays) - we will do our best to fit in around your diary commitments but we are both also undertaking research in Canada, NZ and Australia.

We recognize this is a significant imposition on your busy schedule with relatively short notice, but, given the importance of the topic and your valuable knowledge of local government in Manchester, we really need your help! Your leadership experiences, opinions and stories will help us write a thorough and comprehensive report to help shape the option of a mayoral leadership model across other English towns and cities. We will, of course, provide you with a copy of the interview notes to verify before we use them and can assure anonymity if that is required. We will also provide you with a copy of the final report in April 2012.

I have enclosed a summary of our aims for the research but if you have any further questions about the process or purpose of the research I would be very pleased to answer them, either by email: keith.grint@wbs.ac.uk or by phone (0)2476 150472.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KS' followed by a flourish.

Keith Grint
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APPENDIX 4 – INFORMATION ENCLOSED WITH LETTERS TO INTERVIEWEES



Warwick Commission on Elected Mayors

Initial Proposal:

The University of Warwick has been invited to convene a Commission on the introduction of Directly Elected Mayors across 12 of England's major cities. The aim is not to consider if Directly Elected Mayors are a good thing or not, but to consider the optimal responsibilities and structure under a City Mayor.

To achieve this, the Commission are required to consider evidence and best practice from across the globe.

Research:

The intent is to evaluate the case for Directly Elected Mayors from the perspective of strategic leadership; to be done by setting out the advantages and disadvantages to cities considering Directly Elected Mayors in advance of the referendum.

Research Question: What is the role of Directly Elected Mayors in providing strategic leadership to local authorities?

Subsidiary Questions:

- Do Elected Mayors make any difference to their local areas? How do we know?
- What is deemed as the primary role of elected mayors?
 - Strategic leadership?
 - Cutting through red tape?
 - Generating a strong local identity?
 - Driving economic growth?
- What are the different models of Directly Elected Mayors?
- What is the role of personality and charisma in the election of mayors?

Commission Report:

The research and interviews are to be carried out during October, November and early December 2011. The final report is due for submission before the end of January 2012.

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APPENDIX 5 – INITIAL CODING CRITERIA FOR THE COMMISSION ON ELECTED MAYORS

1. Identity (person or place)
2. Communication and engagement
3. Accountability and influence
4. Leadership styles (charisma and approach).
5. Partnerships and relationships
6. Powers (soft or hard [Nye, 2008])
7. Politics (party or independent).

APPENDIX 6 – SUMMARY OF COMMISSION REPORT FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

In the Commission report, Grint writes about one plausible explanation of the rise of the elected mayor being globalization. It is a commonplace that the world is becoming smaller due to every place gradually looking the same with every person being connected to everyone else. Grint argues in the report that geographic location appears irrelevant and that citizens of the world are now literally living in a placeless location.

In 1800, only 3 percent of the world's population lived in a city. Globalization has taken hold, with these cities now competing across country borders not just county lines.

Bell and Shalit (2010) reflect this argument made by Grint calling the rise of the city the 'civicism' - a distant echo of the original city-states in Ancient Greece. While Glaeser (2011: 269) argues the increase of a city's density with buildings and citizens is encouraging spontaneous face-to-face connections facilitating innovation due to 'our ability to connect with one another [which] is the defining characteristic of our species.'

The interviews conducted with current mayors at the time of the research for the commission, demonstrated the tendency of an elected mayor to combine this idea of 'civicism' and place. As Grint stresses, 'they offer the possibility of displacing the Placeless nature of contemporary life with a Place to call home' (2012: 27). Elected Mayors are globally associated with cities. Mayor Giuliani of New York

was recognized worldwide due to his leadership after September 11, 2001, and Mayor Bob Parker in Christchurch, is recognized all over New Zealand for his leadership after the recent earthquakes. Most cities around the world have either directly or indirectly elected mayors – it is a globally recognized title, including Beijing, Sao Paulo, Berlin, Moscow, Sydney, Vancouver, Mumbai, and Chicago - all global cities not just competing within their country boundary, or with neighbouring countries, but with cities and countries all around the world.

Sir Peter Soulsby, City Mayor of Leicester demonstrated this at a debate at the Coventry Chamber of Commerce in early 2012⁶⁸ by saying how the Chief Executive of Asda wanted a meeting with the Mayor, ‘He wanted the leader of Leicester, not the leader of the council’. Steve Bullock, Mayor of Lewisham previously the Council Leader, echoes this belief by stating he was ‘the Mayor of Lewisham not the leader of Lewisham Council’⁶⁹. Stuart Drummond, Mayor of Hartlepool also spoke passionately about being representative of a place, ‘The public see the mayor as the representative for the town, the person who can make a difference; the mayor plays a big ambassadorial role, representing the town, tourism, local businesses, council at a regional level.’⁷⁰

Grint highlights under this heading of ‘Place’ the appropriateness for the role of executive mayors, alongside the importance of place in local government in general (Brookes, 2010). He considers the crucial question raised by the commissioners and findings in the Centre for Cities report *Big Shot or Long Shot?*

⁶⁸ Held on 30 March 2012, Chamber House, Coventry

⁶⁹ Quoted at the IfG event in Birmingham on 29 March, 2012

⁷⁰ Taken from a transcript of an interview with Stuart Drummond at The Civic Centre, Hartlepool 21/10/2011

How elected mayors can help drive economic growth in England's cities

regarding the precise nature of city boundaries. Geographically it may be obvious where these boundaries lie, but it may not be the case socio-economically or regionally, therefore the reach of a mayor may not be such a self-evident issue. Magnier, Navarro and Russo (2006:201) refer to a city as an 'urban system': This term takes the traditional concept of the city, but includes many recent and overlapping entities, including the entire metropolitan area, the local authority partnerships, the extensive array of actors involved in the relationship with the city and their actions. They argue that the behavior of mayors (across Europe) in planning and networking is highly symbolic by making it possible to bring together the relevant actors and activities to work towards a vision of the 'urban system' – the Place. In their study of European Mayors, they found these local leaders considered 'Urban Marketing' a vital component of local renewal.

The second consideration of Grint's tripod of fatalism is the 'faceless nature of political life' (2012: 28). He discusses how it is not just the issue of globalization and the geography of place, but he highlights the issue of an accountability crisis, with no one appearing to be responsible or accountable for anything when it all goes wrong. Across political life and organizations, fears of corruption and blame have created the common perception of a world where distributed leadership, committees and endless meetings now take place – most of the time behind closed doors – to disperse any possible comeback on any decision that is made. This issue was particularly apparent when talking to elected mayors in England who had also been council leaders. Peter Soulsby, City Mayor of Leicester⁷¹, was a

⁷¹ Taken from transcripts of interviews held 11/10/11 and 13/10/11, at Leicester City Hall, Leicester.

council leader in Leicester for seventeen years. He believes his role as Mayor is far more accountable, not just to the political group, but to the electorate because they voted for him – he is recognizable as a leader, with people stopping him in the street to talk to him. His executives – Assistant Mayors – who make up his cabinet, are now experiencing meetings which are more focused, far more public facing in terms of decision-making, and more structured with more support from the City Mayor in person. As well as one-to-one meetings with his cabinet, the City Mayor holds cabinet meetings three times a week, instead of one every three weeks, allowing the City Mayor, his Deputy and Assistant Mayors to be more focused, work more proactively with the local media, and more importantly, be far more accountable to the citizen. Andy Keeling, Peter's Chief Operating Officer⁷² stressed the importance of Peter wanting people to know what they are accountable for: 'He wants them to be more conscious of accountability and responsibility rather than being purely operational and strategic. Peter sees himself as accountable for the City.'

Sir Steve Bullock⁷³ was also a council leader for Lewisham in the past, before becoming their first directly elected mayor in 2002. He discussed passionately how, as a council leader, there was a compulsion to always 'discuss the minutiae' which appeared to be rooted into the system and a culture of no one wanting to take personal responsibility for decision-making. He experienced first hand the committee system appearing to 'defer decision-making because they always wanted more information'. As a council leader, he was unable to stand up for

⁷² Taken from transcript of interview on 12/10/11, Leicester City Hall, Leicester.

⁷³ Taken from transcript of an interview on 22/11/11, Civic Centre, Catford Rd, Lewisham.

what he believed was right to do. As he put it bluntly, ‘having a council leader was a way of not making a decision’.

Ray Mallon⁷⁴, independent mayor of Middlesbrough, believes his role is about empowerment, accountability and responsibility. Empowerment is about working with the councillors and the electorate to establish a mandate that the people and the place believe in. Accountability is about the electorate voting for him across the place in their thousands, not in their hundreds across a constituency with a political party appointing the leader, and therefore voting for a directly elected leader enables him or her to challenge the council about why, when and how things happen. And his final point on responsibility is not just about his personal responsibility, but it includes his first point of empowering others, treating people like adults, not abusing power, but doing it together.

To hold an individual accountable requires the face of a person to be known to one and all but the powers and responsibilities that lie between central and local government are murky and muddy to many members of the public, leaving the electorate confused. This is particularly apparent in local elections when the locale are not always aware of the ‘face’ that they are voting for because they tend to vote for a party. In a general election, most voters would probably admit to voting for the ‘face’ of a party leader to be prime minister, not just the party’s manifesto. A poll conducted by the Institute for Government during the lead up to the mayoral referendum in May 2012, revealed that only 15 per cent of the 2,299 people polled said they knew the name of their local council leader – but only 8

⁷⁴ Taken from transcript of an interview held on 26/04/12, Welcome Centre, Short St, Coventry.

per cent (half) of these people actually got the name right (Adonis and Gash, 2012: 6-7). In Anna Randle's Mayors Midterm report in 2004 (28), a poll conducted by her team revealed a similar result with 57 per cent of people in a mayoral area being able to identify and name their mayor, but only 25 per cent of people in a council leader area being able to identify and name their council leader. At the time Randle declared this in her report as 'immensely powerful' considering that these mayors had only been in post for between twelve to eighteen months, with some being new faces to the local political arena. She reported that this result in the poll supported the theory that directly elected mayors demonstrated an increase in visibility and accountability to the public.

The third and final part of the 'tripod of fatalism' that Grint (2012: 32) discussed in the commission report suggested three political metaphors: The efficient but directionless Nautilus to describe the political elite (Oborne, 2007) who inhabit different political parties, but who all have a similar political agenda at heart; The Saviour, which describes the possibility of the charismatics who impose their will onto a directionless populace; and, The Centaur, a Weberian 'politician with a sense of vocation', an individual with a moral vision to make a difference.

The first metaphor, The Nautilus, considers the political class that is more concerned with efficiency – 'Tame' problems – rather than the 'Wicked' problems of dichotomous political values (Grint, 2005, 2012). Osborne (2007) has suggested we are witnessing the rise of a new professional political elite (Mosca, 1939) that is not necessarily from the same class or educational background, but rather has the same career paths with the same intentions – that is to rule, but not for a

particular political ideal. Historically, politicians were interested in politics through a calling that reflected a class, locality, or civic good, and they were faithful to their party. Osborne argues that today where duty used to sit at the heart of the political establishment, there is now a corrupt group of self-interested individuals who have an interest in politics as a professional career not a calling – or as Weber described it, a vocation; those whose values propelled them into the political arena.

The cautionary tale here is of a political world dominated by a professional elite with a decreased interest in traditional party politics, in turn gradually leading to the electorate to become apathetic about voting due to the miniscule difference between policy and promise of the politicians (Grint, 2008, 2012:33). The decline in diverse politics is also reflected in a decline in diverse politicians and was highlighted in a report by the Institute of Government where Adonis and Gash (2012:8) noted the danger of the rise of the middle class white male, not just nationally but also internationally. Despite this observation, there is a rise in numbers of female mayors in New Zealand. Talking to Julie Hardaker,⁷⁵ the Independent Mayor of Hamilton in New Zealand, she reflected on part of the reason she may have been voted for by the electorate:

As well as the public's' concerns over the previous council, with the debt and financial issues that were not being acknowledged, it was time for a younger more attractive female mayor, rather than the stereotype of an older male. I know it sounds funny, but it's true! Around New Zealand

⁷⁵ Taken from a transcript of an interview held 10/11/11, The Mayor's Office, Hamilton City Hall, Hamilton, New Zealand.

women have an image of getting things done – we tend to just get on with it.

Of the ten main cities in New Zealand, four of these places have female mayors.

The second political metaphor, The Saviour, reflects reactions to the recent era of austerity. Grint (2012:33) writes about this situation witnessing the rise of the ‘powerless’, the invasion of the ‘occupiers’, but also the potential of the charismatics who appear to forcefully impose their being on the seemingly lost populace. The ‘saviour’ as a mayor of a place has the potential to be able to rescue local politics because of the security of a four-year term, allowing mayors to focus more externally on place and not worry about the internal party political game playing, protecting their decision-making from the bureaucracy and distributed responsibility of party politics. An issue for such ‘saviours’ was that public expectations were being set very high, and Mayors interviewed across England, Canada and New Zealand all agreed that this was a big problem. Because the public chose and voted for a person to lead, they expected things to get done – but if the powers are not in place, then expectations cannot be met. Indeed, the commission highlighted this issue of ‘powers’ being one of the main areas that the coalition was not clear about in advance – allowing the cynics and ‘No’ campaigners to make their own assumptions. As well as limited powers, the other issue with a ‘saviour’ is hubris or the scapegoat, reflecting the lack of clarity on scrutiny being proposed, along with the powers to remove an individual. If the person is damaging to an area or unable to fulfill the role, what powers do the

council and the electorate have to give this person a vote of no confidence and have them removed?

The third and final option of the ‘Centaur’ considers the politician and their calling to politics – as Weber said, a sense of vocation. Grint (2012:34) recognizes the tension in the contradiction of the ‘ethic of conviction’ - being the value-based vision of the political end unwilling to be concerned about the means - with the ‘ethic of responsibility’ being the realization that politics is about compromise. A centaur as mayor is required to be half of one and half of the other – half man, half beast. In other words, to have the ability to re-enchant the body politic where it is needed, produce some political vision into the repetitive political world where the lack of political innovation coincides with an abundance of ego, as well as being a grounded individual with enough common sense to not become dictatorial. For instance, Jules Piper,⁷⁶ Mayor of Hackney, inherited a disillusioned locale where there was poverty, violence and danger on the streets. To ensure he could build the damaged bridges with the citizens of Hackney, he was aware he needed short-term wins – for example, repairing roads and switching on streetlights - with a long term renovation and redevelopment plan for the area including a new library, higher police profile on the streets and five new improved secondary schools. Hackney went from being a hung council, with Jules believing it to be one of the worst in the country ‘with only 25 per cent of council tax collected, having the most dangerous children’s services in the country, and one in every other street light wasn’t working,’ to winning the Local Government Chronicle’s most improved council of the year in 2010.

⁷⁶ Taken from transcript of an interview held 22/11/11, Hackney Town Hall, Mare Street, London.

APPENDIX 7

THE STORY OF ‘CAMP OBAMA’ – GANZ AND BARACK OBAMA’S PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN 2008

In his book *The Performance of Politics: Obama’s Victory and the Democratic Struggle for Power*, Jeffery Alexander (2010) attempts to write from the perspective of the insider as the campaign manager, and the outsider as a journalist and academic. He considers the strategies and statements of those who were behind the planning and directing of the 2008 campaign, not losing sight of the media, or the overall big picture of the battle to win. Zack Exley is a political journalist who followed the Obama campaign with interest and wrote a series of investigative articles for the Huffington Post at the time of the campaign.

Why Ganz was asked to be part of the team to strategically design a training program stems back to Obama’s experiences and use of storytelling. Barack Obama had already published a book on his story of self titled *Dreams from My Father*, and from his time in 1988 organizing Chicago’s underprivileged racial communities, he observed that to build a culture meant ‘building up stories and getting people to reflect on what their lives mean.... And how they are part of a larger force’ (Remnick, 2010: 179). This became the overall aim of Camp Obama. Alexander and Exley both witnessed Ganz and his colleague Manny help the paid and unpaid volunteers tell their stories, and build relationships to organize a campaign that Exley described as ‘... the first [campaign] in the Internet era to realize the dream of a disciplined, volunteer-driven, bottom-up-AND-top-down,

distributed and massively scalable organizing campaign.... this is practically an apocryphal event' (2008)⁷⁷.

Alexander joined a session early on a Saturday morning, in a community arts centre in a working-class Hispanic neighborhood in Denver, Colorado, where two hundred first, second and third generation Americans of Hispanic origin were getting together for their training exercise at the Denver Camp Obama. Alongside them were twenty Field Organizers (FOs) who were mostly of a younger generation hired full time for the national campaign and paid a minimal salary for their commitment. Although they stepped forward as volunteers initially, the FOs were formerly all recruited by the national staff and were putting their usual lives on hold for the duration of the campaign to organize neighborhood teams in the key voting states. The motivation behind the often repeated, yet unreported by the media, Camp Obama training exercise, was to win the ground games of the campaign that Obama and his team knew would make all this difference on voting day; this meant motivating and engaging with the Latino strongholds.

The day begun with how Ganz begins his theory behind *Public Narrative*, with the national staff taking to the stage area to tell their stories of self and how they became part of the Obama campaign. It was then the turn of Manny (Ganz personally taught at three of the twelve sessions, but this one was led by one of his colleagues) to begin the initial session by asking people to speak about how they felt about the previous evening (a dinner had been held for people to initially

⁷⁷ Zack Exley, Huffington Post, *The New Organizers, What's really behind Obama's ground game*, 8 October 2008 www.huffingtonpost.com/zack-exley/the-new-organizers-part-1_b_132782.html, accessed 20 May 2014

meet). Alexander observed an immediate silence and awkwardness around the room, which soon began to melt when a couple of responses were shouted out. More responses followed taking a general format of not feeling alone, and already feeling wanted and part of something special. The next step in this initial session was for Manny to assure the audience that what they were there for was organizing, but not to organize interests and resources, although this might be part of it in the latter stages. He stressed to all the individuals in the room organizing was about ‘sharing your story’ and ‘working together for the common good’ (Alexander, 2010: 48). He continued to caution the audience not to lecture people that they were trying to organize, but to ‘relate their stories to yours and through yours to the campaign’s. Organizing is about building a relationship’ (2010: 48), stressing his definition of relationship as ‘trust, respect, interaction, commonality, getting to know each other – openness.’

During the Camp Obama session that Exley attended at Morris Brown College, Atlanta, Georgia, he noted how the most powerful tool for these campaigners was not just about forming teams and getting organized, but it was how to tell their own stories, along with the ability to teach others how to tell their stories when recruiting and motivating volunteers and building relationships with voters⁷⁸. It was all about the encouragement of their own life stories with the voters, with a belief of speaking from the heart to enable the tedious, cold calling and door knocking into a communal activity. Martelle (2008) wrote in a column for the Los Angeles Times during the campaign that Ganz’s teaching was about passion, not

⁷⁸ Zack Exley *Stories and Numbers – a Closer look at Camp Obama*, www.huffingtonpost.com/zack-exley/stories-and-numbers-a-clo b 62278.html – accessed 20 May 2014

about policy. Whilst interviewing Ganz, Martelle (2008)⁷⁹ quoted him as saying, ‘It’s counterintuitive. At Camp Obama the tendency is, “I need to know all of the arguments.” No. You need to learn to talk from your own experiences. It’s a very empowering thing.’

The FOs at the Denver session were asked to take their personal groups of volunteers and tell their story of self of why they were part of the campaign. The conversation then developed into the FO leading the group, asking the volunteers why they were there – to tell their story of self in approximately two minutes. In Atlanta when this part of the day was being executed, Exley immediately noticed there was awkwardness in the group, which the FO as facilitator noticed and pulled the people through it. What impressed Exley, and what he was certainly not prepared for, was the level of skills, experience, wisdom and intellect amongst the group. He admitted to initially being judgmental of the volunteers, seeing them as a room full of ‘ordinary campaign volunteers’, but the personal stories of self he heard made him realize there was nothing ‘ordinary’ about them: ‘They were insanely talented, wise and courageous leaders.’ There were seven volunteers in the particular group that Exley was observing and he recalls four particular stories, of which one of these is repeated below as an example of what lies beneath a person’s façade:

Tryshand grew up poor in a very small Georgia town. She had no trouble succeeding in a failing school system, but then, in college, found herself far less prepared than the other students in the major she had chosen – which was, of course, astrophysics. As she struggled, two different

⁷⁹ Scott Martelle, Los Angeles Times, *Famed organizer sees history in the making*, 15 June 2008, accessed 20 May 2014

professors tried to steer her towards a major in education. One told her, 'this isn't a field for black girls.' Another told her he was sure she was being set by affirmative action for failure, though actually her scholarship had been awarded for academic performance only. Despite that discouragement, she stuck with it and now does some crazy high tech job for NASA that I couldn't understand when she explained it to me.⁸⁰

After this session in Camp Obama training, each FO showed their group a recording of segments of Obama's speeches to communicate his story of self about hope and justice. Next came the open and honest conversation about some tough targets the FOs had previously been given by the national staff regarding goals and targets, all detailed on one page of A4 paper. They were tough numbers regarding how many contacts each volunteer had to pursue, alongside house meetings, phone calls, and the like. Despite the FOs initially resisting these demands, viewing them as set from outside of the Camp, they eventually agreed that they would communicate them to the volunteers personally, rather than in text form. The FOs demonstrated honesty with their groups, being open from the start that the targets were tough. The particular FO being observed by Alexander asked her group straight: 'How are we going to do this?' (2010: 50). There was no resistance from the volunteers; ideas came flooding in regarding venues to targets, community groups, local festivals, providing food and music, and so on. As Exley had realized listening closely to the stories of self, these people volunteering their time lived humbly and totally in the service to others; they were certainly not big headed or self-absorbed, despite the amount of knowledge, experience and ideas

⁸⁰ (Quote taken directly from Exley's article in the Huffington Post)

they had to share with one another. They had the ability to pool their experiences and produce ways of overcoming these tough targets – as a team.

In another of his articles following the Obama campaign for the Huffington Post, Exley⁸¹ observed the role of the FOs in the field and noted the importance of face-to-face meetings because of the effectiveness in harnessing volunteers within their teams to complete a lot of training and debriefing themselves. It allowed the FOs as team leaders to give people time to keep updating their stories, with everyone getting a sense of progress and learning from each other how to be more effective as time progresses. One particular group of volunteers he met in Southwest Ohio had dinner together every Tuesday evening and breakfast every Saturday morning, with the team leader interviewed understanding this level of commitment being due to being part of something that is local and social.

The next exercise was to encourage cohesion and continue the building of the relationships in the group and was observed by Alexander to make the groups initially feel a little uncomfortable. They had been asked by Manny to devise a skit, a poem, a performance of any kind that said something about them as a group, who they are, what they want and where they live. Alexander witnessed awkwardness and thought the exercise artificial, but some members of the group he was observing appeared to find it appealing, and immediately started to put ideas forward for a poem. This poem then morphed into a rap involving Spanish argot, involving Gringos, Obama, Latinos, including references to what it is like

⁸¹ Zack Exley, Huffington Post, *The New Organizers, What's really behind Obama's ground game*, 8 October 2008 www.huffingtonpost.com/zack-exley/the-new-organizers-part-1_b_132782.html, accessed 20 May 2014

being a US citizen and wishing to be free. Once prepared, each group took their turn in presenting their performances of who *they* were as a collective *us*. Alexander witnessed an eclectic mix of serious, awkward, poised, enthusiastic, amateurish, yet energetic performances of which everyone was applauding, with whistles and cat calling, laughter and banter. What Alexander as an observer realized he was witnessing was the breaking down of lines between audience and actor, the paid staff and the volunteers – relationships were continuing to be built.

The next stage of Camp Obama was to encourage volunteers to start sharing their stories with the ‘neighbours’ in their communities. To do this, it was suggested by Manny that they hold house parties, because in his experience they are the key to political organizing, due to the informal way it allows people to sit around and tell their stories. Each FO and their groups of volunteers were given a target to telephone fifty neighbors from within their closest networks, there and then, to get the contacts to commit to a time and a place for a ‘party’. Manny at this point in the day was attempting to get the groups to understand the story of now and put it into action.

To conclude the day of training and stories of self, us and now, the groups were encouraged to discuss the concrete actions that they had already achieved in the day, with Alexander witnessing how this included individuals reassuring each other of what good things had been achieved. It was obvious how people were feeling a sense of solidarity to face the task ahead of them. Before they could leave for the social dinner that evening, each group was encouraged to communicate their ideas for the week ahead and share what it had meant to meet

each other during this training day. This included the FO observing the groups thoughts, to conclude by addressing each volunteer personally for what they had contributed during the day. After the group had dispersed for dinner, Alexander interviewed the FO about what she thought the motivation behind Camp Obama was about and how effective it had been. She spoke about how she supported the day with regards to it providing a foundation for relationships with one another that encouraged a strong sense of personal responsibility with each individual, alongside increasing each individuals drive to take action, fusing the group together: ‘They don’t want to let each other down’ (Alexander, 2010: 58).

During dinner there were a handful of specially invited speakers related to the Obama campaign to tell their stories of self and to communicate further the story of now and the challenges that lay ahead for the ‘us’. After dinner, there was a graduation – or as Ganz refers to it in his work, a celebration. This was an opportunity for everyone to feel that something had been achieved; their time had been appreciated; and, in recognition everyone was given a certificate, a t-shirt, a mug, but most importantly a thank you for their time so far. To reflect on the day’s training, Manny, the FOs and the national staff sat and debriefed on how the groups had moved from being a hypothetical group of volunteers to a collective of emerging relationships, reminding the paid staff, ‘Today brought home to me why I do this’ (Alexander, 2010: 59).

What was emerging in the field, according to Exley’s observations, was totally different to what he had observed during the 2004 Kerry campaign where crowds of canvassers received minimal instruction, being sent to unfamiliar

neighborhoods, with no opportunities to debrief or socialize with others doing the same job, as a collective. It was becoming obvious to Exley that the key behind the Obama campaign in 2008 was the emergence of strong relationships, and these relationships had begun during the training, and this is what had been critical to the success of the ‘unorthodox model’ being applied. The campaigners with previous experiences of working on other campaigns had said that training was usually no more than a two-hour orientation. What they had now received was real, interactive and in-depth. The words ‘Respect. Empower. Include’ were displayed in large letters in all the offices that Exley visited, with organizers using the words all the time, supporting them with details of their organizing in practice, telling their story of us.

Being able to observe the campaign from the inside, Alexander and Exley witnessed organizing and leadership, face-to-face. They both realized that organizing through leadership storytelling was about connections, engagement, emotion, morality and identification - building relationships.

APPENDIX 8 – BACKGROUND TO BP PLC AND THE DEEPWATER HORIZON DISASTER

Despite other recent disasters in BP's history, nothing significant was implemented or changed to improve safety, repair or service machinery, or learn from mistakes. In 1999, after the illegal waste-dumping in Alaska, a felony conviction was stamped on BP. Six years later, in 2005, fifteen lives were lost and one hundred and seventy were injured during the Texas oil refinery blast, resulting in heavy criminal convictions with fines in the region of \$50 million and an identification of negligent corporate behavior (Reed and Fitzgerald, 2011).

Less than a year later further criminal convictions for negligence, costing around \$12 million, were issued with cost-cutting playing a major part in the Prudhoe Bay pipeline spill releasing over two hundred gallons of oil into the Alaska tundra (Sachs, 2012). After the Texas oil refinery blast in 2005, an independent expert committee identified the negligent corporate behavior in the areas of maintenance revealing severe backlogs, a damaging disconnect between management and their apparent commitment to safety undermined by what they were prepared to invest. All of this raised serious underlying integrity issues far deeper inside the organization (Dekker, 2011b: 4). In 2010 they were fined another \$50 million for failing to eliminate these problems identified after the Texas blast, which was one of the conditions of the probation period applied to the organization (Reed and Fitzgerald, 2011).

Under the leadership of Chief Executive John Browne (1999-2007), despite his green commitments, it became apparent that BP was increasing profits by laying

off thousands of employees, many of whom were engineers whose primary responsibilities were to ensure drilling projects would not lead to disaster. The cost cutting to increase profits, the redundancies, the previous disasters and documented near disasters were putting employees in a culture where they felt pressured to put production ahead of safety and quality, with workers who voiced concerns being sanctioned or even fired, therefore shutting down any potential flow of important safety-related information or learning (Dekker, 2011b). Workers were also overworked, struggling to cope with the backlog of maintenance issues, with not enough personnel to cope with the demanding workloads (Reed and Fitzgerald, 2011).

Despite the resignation of Browne in 2007 (due to a personal legal scandal) and the appointment of a twenty-seven year veteran employee of BP, Tony Hayward who insisted he was going to reform BP and focus on safety, it seems that he was too much a part of the management culture that said a lot but did very little (Sachs, 2012): nothing much changed with regards to the larger, more challenging, safety issues.

During the leadership of Tony Hayward, BP may have been the world pioneers in ‘ultradeep’ offshore drilling, with drilling and excavating oil over thirty thousand feet below the earth’s surface (Steffy, 2011) – almost the altitude a passenger airline would cruise at - but it was also top of the list regarding the number of safety violations (Sachs, 2011).

Despite Hayward inheriting a world leading organization in oil and gas exploration, BP was built around an overly cohesive leadership team virtually blind to its own faults. Hayward was the protégé of his predecessor Browne and continued to surround himself with others who saw the world as he did, continuing to ignore or punish any employees who attempted to dissent.

The initial finger pointing as to who was to blame for the incident was directed at Transocean - the owners of the Deepwater Horizon rig. Tony Hayward was unable to find any answers as to what had happened and used Transocean as a shield to protect the reputation and corporate image of BP. However, as the lease owner of the rig, BP was responsible for any pollution resulting from the wreckage of the rig (Steffey, 2011). As well as a political situation, BP faced huge fines and costs for the liability of the pollution of up to \$4,300 per barrel of oil (Clean Water Act), civil penalties around \$25,000 a day, and a further \$1,000 a barrel of oil spilled under the Oil Pollution Act. There was then compensation for the businesses around the Gulf of Mexico who had suffered (President Obama instructed BP to initially pay out \$20 billion dollars to be administered by the government), alongside the billions of dollars towards clean up costs.

APPENDIX 9 – ETHICS DURING RESEARCH CONDUCT

The social research undertaken for this project was conducted responsibly, sincerely and in light of moral and legal order within the society being studied.

Throughout the project, a high standard of methodology was conducted during the collection and analysis of data, with impartial assessment and dissemination of the findings. Social research can never be entirely objective, however professional integrity was upheld and the methods used did not allow for any misleading results or misrepresented findings, ensuring the avoidance of bias as much as possible.

All subjects were formally invited to participate in the research allowing them to volunteer their time accordingly, thereby giving their full consent. They were treated respectfully and professionally, and were appropriately briefed about the research and how their contributions would be used in the future in terms of reports, possible articles and the final thesis.

It was my task, as the researcher, to maintain morals and principles of confidentiality as far as possible so all participants interests were and are sufficiently protected. Social research can be intrusive therefore there is the need to respect individuals' values, their sense of privacy, along with their busy lifestyles. All participants that contributed were treated in the same way and were all credited accordingly for their participation and contributions.

All data collated has been and will be, confidentially stored on a computer system, which is password protected, and only known by the researcher. All the data coded and stored electronically were assigned codes. Any quotes that have been used are all approved by the subject with further approvals to use their name, position and location. If permission to use their names was not granted, but the quotes were still approved, they were used anonymously. Some participants requested personal approval of transcripts taken; this has been honored in all requested cases.

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